DISSENT

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Mr. Galbraith's Economics	BERNARD ROSENBERG

WINTER 1954

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DISSENT

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DISSENT

A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

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A WORD TO OUR READERS

The purpose of this new magazine is suggested by its name: to dissent from the bleak atmosphere of conformism that pervades the political and intellectual life of the United States; to dissent from the support of the *status quo* now so noticeable on the part of many former radicals and socialists; to dissent from the terrible assumption that a new war is necessary or inevitable, and that the only way to defeat Stalinism is through atomic world suicide.

The accent of DISSENT will be radical. Its tradition will be the tradition of democratic socialism. We shall try to reassert the libertarian values of the socialist ideal, and at the same time, to discuss freely and honestly what in the socialist tradition remains alive and what needs to be discarded or modified.

DISSENT is not and does not propose to become a political party or group. On the contrary, its existence is based on an awareness that in America today there is no significant socialist movement and that, in all likelihood, no such movement will appear in the immediate future. The editors and supporters of DISSENT are independent radicals bound together by common values and ideas, who are eager to assert those values and ideas, as well as to discuss freely their differences and problems.

DISSENT will attempt to:

- provide fresh and lively critical opinion on the issues of the day.
- bring together intellectual sentiment against the blight of conformism.
- defend democratic, humanist and radical values.
- attack all forms of totalitarianism, whether fascist or Stalinist.
- engage in a frank and friendly dialogue with liberal opinion.
- publish studies of American cultural life.
- encourage scholarly contributions in political and social thought.
- discuss and reevaluate socialist doctrines.

DISSENT will not have any editorial position or statements. Each writer will speak for himself. Our magazine will be open to a wide arc of opinion, excluding only Stalinists and totalitarian fellow-travellers on the

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one hand, and those former radicals who have signed their peace with society as it is, on the other. We shall welcome any expression of lively and competent thought, or scholarly contributions touching upon our area of interest, even if these dissent from DISSENT.

But DISSENT would be meaningless if in dissenting it did not also affirm. We are united in the affirmation of a positive belief—the belief in socialism. Not the "socialism" of any splinter or faction or party, but rather the ethos and the faith in humanity that for more than 100 years have made men "socialists." We share a belief in the dignity of the individual, we share a refusal to countenance one man's gain at the expense of his brother, and we share an intellectual conviction that man can substantially control his condition if he understands it and wills to.

DISSENT is being published by a group of independent radicals who have raised the funds necessary to insure the honoring of the subscriptions we solicit. At a meeting held recently, fifty friends of the magazine discussed plans, elected an editorial board and a larger supervisory committee. Different emphases of opinion were heard at this conference, yet all agreed that the voice of DISSENT should be heard.

Without further ado, we present our first issue. It does not fulfill all of our hopes and aspirations—no first issue could. We particularly hope that in later issues there will be more articles of a discussion nature. But we think that this first issue provides a warrant of our seriousness and an indication of our purpose.

If you would like to see such a magazine thrive in America, you can join the friends of DISSENT in obtaining subscriptions from your friends, in contributing the funds—and the articles—required for its sustenance, and in spreading the word that there is a free voice of DISSENT.

THE EDITORS

Does It Hurt When You Laugh?

The confusion of modern politics runs so deep, the breakdown of those traditional responses which held together a more or less "enlightened" public is so complete, that one no longer knows what feeling an event is likely to evoke among people of some political sophistication, *particularly* among people of political sophistication. For example. The American Committee for Cultural Freedom recently held a conference in New York on European-American relations, at which a large number of distinguished intellectuals tried to find out why Europe doesn't love us. A few days earlier there had appeared in the *New York Times* a chapter of

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Winston Churchill's memoirs which bluntly described how he and Stalin had carved up Eastern Europe. Did any of the intellectuals in New York think to make a connection between their "problem" and Churchill's revelation? Did any of them suggest that one reason for the deep-seated "neutralist" feeling on the continent may be a resentment against precisely the kind of fact that Churchill revealed?

Or take the problem of civil liberties. Last summer the New School for Social Research decided to hang a yellow curtain over an Orozco mural in its cafeteria, because the mural included portraits of Lenin and Stalin. The mural, explained Dr. Hans Simons, president of the school, "does not express the philosophy of the faculty." (Did it "express" that philosophy when it was first unveiled?) In reply to protests, Dr. Simons said that the mural was "a problem of the school" and did not concern "the outside." One is not shocked at this, the language is familiar enough, go a step further and you have the American Legion or the DAR telling one to *go back where you came from.* But wait: the philistine reference to "the outside" comes not from the American Legion but from the New School, the New School which began as a refuge for liberalism and freedom. Well, Dr. Simons, one is sorry to say this, but the mural is not merely "a problem of the school"; and one would be delighted to go back where one came from: New York.

Or consider the clash between the state of Indiana and Robin Hood. A member of the State Textbook Commission had demanded an investigation to see whether the Robin Hood story spreads Communistic propaganda, since, as everyone knows, Robin robbed the rich to help the poor. Ordinarily this would be great fun, a prime example of nativist ignorance; but can one, should one laugh today? Is it really funny? Doesn't it take place in an atmosphere where little idiocies quickly lead to big disasters? (To be sure, there are some quarters that don't feel worried at all, that seem to imply, in fact, that there is no need for concern until Sidney Hook is accused of robbing the rich to help the poor.)

The liberals are bewildered. The group around *The Nation* cries wolf day and night, never troubling to make elementary distinctions between native know-nothingism and full-fledged fascism. Yet, it is sad to say, *The Nation* provides more necessary information about violations of civil liberties than any comparable American journal. That it uses this necessary information to further the disastrous position of quasi-appeasement of Stalinism, merely emphasizes all the more the failure of the other, more powerful wing of liberalism to do its job. I refer, of course, to those sophisticated liberals who read *Commentary* and think of Sidney Hook as their intellectual spokesman.

Now I do not mean to say that Sidney Hook is indifferent to the problem of civil liberties, or that he is "against" them. What is far more im-

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portant is that the commitments at the deepest levels of feeling, the responses that really and evidently *matter,* are not, for people like Hook and the political writers for *Commentary,* aroused by the problem of civil liberties. Were one to read only a journal like *Commentary* today, one would hardly be aware that there is a serious threat to civil liberties in America, though one would certainly know that certain Stalinoids are inflating and exploiting this threat for their own purposes.

TAKE ANOTHER EXAMPLE. For six years now a conspicuously powerless group called the Independent Socialist League, in political complexion Marxist and premature anti-Stalinist, has been on the Attorney General's "Subversive List." This disgraceful amalgam with Stalinist organizations has done the members of the ISL considerable harm. Yet hardly a voice has been raised in the official circles of liberalism to fight against this injustice. For what does it matter? Everyone knows that in difficult times minor injustices are unavoidable, and besides it *is* such an insignificant group. . . .

Now, finally, the Attorney General has filed a "bill of particulars" against the ISL. The group is not even accused of favoring "the violent overthrow" of the government; in substance and apart from the gross ignorance of the Attorney General's charges, the ISL is accused of nothing more than being Marxist and desiring the abolition of capitalism. This, the Attorney General implies, is enough to make it "subversive." Does anyone --except to his honor, Norman Thomas—speak up? Would Sidney Hook trouble to mention this case in one of his innumerable articles in the Sunday *Times?* Are you likely to find such things if you read a score of *Commentaries?*

That the liberals have changed or modified their ideas is not important; so has everyone of any intelligence. That they have lost their capacity for integral response, not all but all too many, is important. How easy it is to attack and destroy "the ritual liberals," those, that is, who favor unconditional civil liberties without regard to the Stalinist problem! How easy it is to offer the "sophisticated" notion that Stalinists have no claim upon civil liberties because they are intent upon destroying them . . . but what if someone asks: should the McCarthyites be deprived of *their* civil liberties because they too are intent upon destroying them?

We do not live in "a reign of terror," and when Bertrand Russell carelessly says that we do he plays into the hands of those with a stake in consistently underestimating the danger to our freedoms. But surely the borders of the mind are contracting in America, not through physical terror or force but through built-in fears, through hesitations and cautions which are not without a genuine basis in reality. And what is most disheartening is not

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that the reactionaries attack but that the liberals hardly remember how to counter-attack.

Well, here may be one answer to the questions that readers are likely to ask of DISSENT: what is your purpose? What do you think radicals can do in America today? What follows is hardly a full or sufficient answer but it is not at all insignificant. American radicals can do at least this much: together with those liberals who have not become, in the phrase of C. Wright Mills, "crackpot realists," we can try to raise the traditional banner of personal freedom that is now slipping from the hands of so many accredited spokesmen of liberalism.

I.H.

Imperialism and the Quest for New Ideas

Political thinking, like merchandising, has its fashions. As Detroit car producers feel that to sell cars new models must be introduced each year, so political theorists have lately felt that to understand the world and sell one's ideas there must be a regular renewal of theoretical equipment. What retooling is to Detroit, the clamor for "new ideas" is to the higher political thinkers though in both cases there is generally a change in the trimmings, not the chassis.

It is indeed impossible to understand genuinely new problems with antiquated theoretical equipment. The sad fact is, however, that many of the old problems still remain with us. If only we could get rid of *them,* how happy one would be to discard the theoretical categories pertinent to their analysis.

Take the concept of imperialism. Most liberals profess to believe that one can speak only of imperialism when referring to the bad old days; the term elicits for them an image of the marines landing in a Banana Republic or British troops lording it in India. One detects a kind of word magic in the writings of such liberals: banish the word and thereby abolish the thing.

How refreshing, by contrast is the cynical frankness of a genuine imperialist like Winston Churchill who, in his recently published memoirs, tells of a conference with Stalin in Moscow in 1944, the very year that saw the high point of propaganda about the Four Freedoms, the Atlantic Charter and all that. Writes Churchill:

> The moment was apt for business, so I said "Let us settle about our affairs in the Balkans. We have interests, missions, and agents there. Don't let us get at cross-purposes in small ways. So far as Britain and

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Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have ninety per cent predominance in Roumania, for us to have ninety per cent of the say in Greece, and go fifty-fifty about Yugoslavia?" While this was being translated I wrote out on a half-sheet of paper:

Roumania	
Russia	90%
The others	10%
Greece	
Great Britain (in accord with U.S.A.)	90%
Russia	10%
Yugoslavia	50-50%
Hungary	50-50%
Bulgaria	
Russia	75%
The others	25%

I pushed this across to Stalin who had by then heard the translation. There was a slight pause. Then he took his blue pencil and made a large tick upon it, and passed it back to us. It was all settled in no more time than it takes to set down.

Churchill wrote on a piece of paper; Stalin made a tick; and that sealed the fate of millions. The heads of two of the three most powerful nations in the world—with the full knowledge and consent of the head of the third —disposed of the lives of subject peoples in roughly the same manner that a generation earlier the heads of the then most powerful imperialist powers carved out and distributed among themselves the African continent. There are, no doubt, a number of important theoretical differences between the structure of imperialism then and imperialism now, but it remains true that superpowers carve up the world and distribute zones of influence the way game wardens delimit hunting areas.

That, to be sure, was in the era of the Four Freedoms. But what about today, when the Free World is engaged in a moral crusade to deliver from slavery those whom it sold to Stalin only a few years ago? America now establishes bases and spheres of influence throughout the world, from Franco's Spain to Greenland, from Japan to South America. When there are elections in Italy everyone knows that the real contenders are not Togliatti and de Gasperi but Stalin and Truman. When even rightist French politicians begin to discuss the advisability of calling off their colonial war in Indo-China they are sternly reminded by Dulles and Nixon that since America now pays more than half the cost it is only to be expected that every Frenchman will do his duty. When the Italian premier Pella hesitates to push the claims of Italy with regard to Trieste he is egged on by Mrs. Luce, the U. S. Ambassadress, and told that he had better get into the fight.

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Meanwhile Russia deports Kalmuks and Rumanians, Hungarian Jews and Volga Germans, liquidates Czech ministers and Hungarian policemen, exploits Polish coal mines and Rumanian oil fields, starves Bulgarian peasants and Manchurian coolies, in the name, of course, of national self-determination.

Does all this constitute imperialism? Every liberal and ex-radical who knows that Marxism is obsolete suddenly remembers that Lenin and Hilferding declared imperialism to be characterized by the export of capital, whereas the United States lends money to and subsidizes the nations it dominates. And of course, there could not be any other kind of imperialism. . . .

Word magic resigns supreme: Two superpowers direct the destinies of the people of the world; they shore up crumbling regimes in Asia and Europe and South America; they do not hesitate to send battleships to remove legally established governments; they do not hesitate to institute terror against nationalist movements. But does this constitute imperialism?

Every liberal knows that Lenin and Hilferding. . . .

And since there is no imperialism, there is no need to speak out in defense of national groupings. Every conceivable solution is suggested for Trieste except the simple and elementary one of allowing the people of that city to decide, by popular vote, their own destiny.

THE LEAST A RADICAL CAN DO in these years of the locusts is to try not to be a dupe. We may be unable to affect the course of history, but we can still control our thinking; we should at least avoid the double-talk and word-magic that is so popular today. When Mr. Dulles attempts to influence the outcome of the German elections or when Mr. Nixon warns the Indonesians against "premature" independence, it is inexcusable to deny that these acts constitute imperialist intervention in the affairs of other nations. There may be and are all sorts of disagreements among socialists as to what policies to adopt with regard to the current world situation; but there should be no disagreement as to the need for calling things by their right names.

L.C.

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The Uses of the Word "Socialism"

From Paris we have received the following letter which raises problems that we hope will be discussed in later issues of DISSENT. Its author, M. Rubel, is a distinguished scholar whose work includes a study of Marxism and morality. His letter came too late for any prolonged comment, but we hope to arrange a symposium on the questions he presents. Brief comments from readers will be extremely welcome.

Today, anyone who insists upon describing himself as a socialist runs the great risk of not being immediately understood. (I do not speak of another risk which such a profession of faith entails in certain countries of high Christian civilization.)

Since the Russian Revolution the term "socialism" has served to designate a regime with enough authority to prohibit its subjects from questioning the validity of this label. Be it usurpation or trickery, the fact remains: hundreds of millions of men are today *forced* to accept for the word "socialism" the content and thought decreed by their political masters in Russia, in China, in the European countries that revolve within the orbit of the Russian star. This fact is new and crushing. Is it not childish to ignore it? To call oneself a "socialist" today in countries where one can still speak freely and, at the same time, to condemn Russo-Asiatic "socialism"—is this not verbal fetishism? Or is not one, at least, indulging in a naive fidelity to a Western tradition more than 100 years old which no longer has any *raison d'etre* in a world where men and things, values and institutions, are ceaselessly undergoing profound transformations?

Further, even in the West and without taking into account the Stalinist imposture, does the significance of the world "socialism" rest upon an unanimously accepted definition, which allows of no equivocation among those who employ the word? Is it not precisely one of the traits of this secular tradition that it permits the "co-existence" of multiple and diverse "socialist" currents and schools which, frequently, confront one another with hostility even when they proclaim their origin from the same intellectual patrimony? There are non-Marxist socialisms, just as there are Marxist and anti-Marxist socialisms. This is only the most significant of the questions with with which anyone is faced when he begins thinking about what a socialism with boundaries fixed in relation to Marx's thought might be today. There is also the sociologically decisive fact of the existence of socialist parties, solidly rooted in the political life of their respective

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countries. What remains, then, for a socialism not to be confounded with any of the ideological tendencies or any of the existing political programs?

Isn't calling oneself a "socialist" (outside of what is institutionally considered as such) deliberately to choose intellectual confusion? And isn't this choice made in order to justify an emotional tie with a tradition that has been condemned by the gigantic upheavals our world has known since the First World War?

There is, however, a way to halt this intellectual confusion. It consists in comparing the conceptual content of the word "socialism," as it was formed in a number of Western minds more than a century ago, with the significance that this term has taken on throughout the whole world beginning with the First World War. Such a confrontation might succeed in reaching a pragmatic conclusion as to the scope and legitimacy of the use of the word "socialism" to designate aspirations as well as intellectual and political attitudes which openly conflict with nearly all existing forms of "socialism," be they in the totalitarian or in the democratic countries. It would make possible, finally, a reply to the question of whether it would not be better today to abandon the *word* socialism to those who have usurped it for oppressive or demagogic ends so as to save the *conceptual content* once attached to this term. Such an inquiry could, at the same time, bring a serious contribution to the study and comprehension of one of the most overwhelming problems of our epoch; the role of language in the formation of the political intelligence of people subjected to the incessant pressures of ideological propaganda.

As can be seen, what is involved is an inquiry both historical and sociological. By tracing back to its origins one of the most powerful social movements of modern times, one could assist in the genesis of what has not ceased to be the unrealized dream of all disinherited humanity since the technical innovations which have almost miraculously multiplied the material power of man: a society from which exploitation would be banished and in which the free unfolding of each individual would be the condition for the freedom of all.

M. RUBEL

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STEVENSON AND THE INTELLECTUALS

Irving Howe

For American radicals these are not times of easy political choice. They are all the more difficult if we continue to think in terms of elections, candidates and parties. Raised, as most of us have been, in a tradition of supporting only socialist or labor candidates, we find the *immediate* problem of the elections perplexing: what shall we do and advise others to do? It seems obvious that the running of independent socialist candidates can, at best, have only occasional local value; the trouble with protest candidates in major elections is that they no longer register any significant protest.

Some socialists continue to favor a rigid intransigeance: no support to either of the two capitalist parties. Others say that an incipient labor-liberal party, the hope for a revived American left, is slowly growing within the loose structure of the Democratic Party, and that socialists should support this incipient movement conditionally and critically—e.g., by voting for Stevenson while making it clear that this does not mean a political bloc with the dominant liberal trend. I incline myself to the latter point of view, though with considerable hesitation; but I am strongly convinced that in the absence of any significant socialist movement, it is a problem of tenth-rate importance, almost a matter of personal choice. What is of major importance, however, is the general attitude one takes toward the dominant political drift of American society, whether one floats along or tries to maintain a sharp, fundamental criticism.

I want therefore to put aside the question of whom socialists and liberals should have voted for; I am far more concerned with the *terms* and the *nature* of the support the liberal and left intellectuals gave to Stevenson. So that if I speak harshly, as I shall, about the intellectuals, it is not here to challenge their formal choice but to evaluate the assumptions behind it and the kinds of behavior that accompanied it.

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I

Only the eggheads surrendered unconditionally. When Adlai Stevenson made his rather cryptic remark about "egghead ecstasy," he was registering a certain irritation with the cult that sprang up around his image in the intellectual world. Whether he objected from a principled dislike of hero worship or from a fear that it would hurt his chance with other, somewhat larger segments of the population, we don't know. Probably he meant both. In any case he completely captured the intellectuals, not least of all those who had declared themselves irrevocably disabused with the political life.

One wonders: why this sudden burst of uncritical enthusiasm? Surely not because Stevenson was a liberal or a New Dealer; the ideological explanation seems weakest. For if it was Stevenson's forthright liberalism that endeared him to the intellectuals, then they should have been fonder still of Truman, a man considerably more forthright. And it is common knowledge that they were not very fond of Truman: even their efforts to admire him had a way of turning into condescension.

In foreign policy Truman and Stevenson—as, for that matter, Eisenhower—had few significant differences, while in domestic policy Truman was, if anything, slightly to the left of Stevenson, who let it be known throughout the campaign that he was a moderate, sensible Democrat.

Which suggests the possibility that Stevenson won the admiration of the intellectuals not because he revived the tradition of American liberalism but because in several important ways he deviated from it.

I have recently been going through Stevenson's campaign speeches, trying to discover the secret of his success with the intellectuals. Part of the secret, I should think, must be that he so vividly symbolized their mixed feelings toward politics itself. The American intellectuals felt that their fingers had been badly burned, though by comparison with the Europeans they had merely suffered a slight singe; they were bored with crusading accents yet still enjoyed a mild idealistic lilt; they were tempted to abandon politics entirely yet felt themselves forced—indeed, trapped—into a lukewarm, gingerly participation; they wished for liberal humaneness but felt that to identify with any social class or group was outmoded, deficient in tone. And here was this remarkable man from Illinois, so charming and cultivated, so witty and so . . . well, *somewhat* weary . . . come to represent and speak for them. Roosevelt might be admired for things he had done, Stevenson was to be admired and identified with simply because of what he was.

Admired and identified with, above all, because he didn't seem really to *like* politics. His most remarkable speech—the speech of acceptance—was a prolonged exercise in ambivalence, a skillful teetering between the

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desire to pull out and the appetite to plunge in: I say "skillful" to suggest that he was a man both torn by doubts and shrewdly able to exploit his state of division. At times Stevenson resembled a debutante who had contracted a hasty marriage and despite the use of the most advanced precautions had been blessed with issue: and there she stands, uncomfortably holding a diaper between thumb and forefinger. Yet this stance could not have been entirely without a disingenuous element, for Stevenson was hardly a political novice. He had been in and near the Democratic Party for years, he had worked with that old Tory Frank Knox, he had served as the candidate of Jake Arvey's Illinois machine, which has never been noted for fastidiousness. Stevenson had not really "earned" his air of withdrawal and distance—he was *not* Henry Adams languidly collapsing on the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Or if he was, then one could not help taking seriously the charges of such a malicious reactionary as James Burnham that Stevenson was unfit to be President through temperamental disability.

In his introduction to his collected speeches Stevenson has written a remarkable passage about his campaign experience:

> You must emerge, bright and bubbling with wisdom and well-being, every morning at 8 o'clock, just in time for a charming and profound breakfast talk, shake hands with hundreds, often literally thousands, of people, make several inspiring, 'newsworthy' speeches during the day, confer with political leaders along the way and with your staff all the time, write at every chance, think if possible, read mail and newspapers, talk on the telephone, *talk to everybody,* dictate, receive delegations, eat, with decorum—and discretion!—and ride through city after city on the back of an open car, *smiling until your mouth is dehydrated by the wind,* waving until the blood runs out of your arm, and then bounce gaily, confidently, masterfully into *great howling halls.* . . .

I have italicized what seem the key phrases: phrases of dissociation which Roosevelt would have been too shrewd to utter and Truman would never have felt any desire to. Precisely this sense of separation from his audience, as from his public self, made Stevenson seem an emblem of the intellectual condition. Under the circumstances it hardly mattered to the intellectuals what he said, just as to the bulk of the middle class it hardly mattered what Eisenhower said.

Not only could the intellectuals identify with Stevenson's public indecisions and hesitations; they could admire the spectacle of such behavior on *a higher social level* than their own. Had Stevenson really been an intellectual in the limited "professional" sense of the word, his proclamations and gestures of delicacy might have seemed annoying, since there is nothing very novel in the sight of an intellectual turning squeamish about tasks he has set himself. But for the intellectuals to see their attitudes acted out

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upon the public stage by a patrician who, unlike FDR, made no effort to be anything but a patrician, by a man whose grandfather had actually been Vice-President of the United States, by a man who had married into wealth with apparent ease and out of it with obvious forbearance—this, indeed, was pleasant. In an age of "the liberal imagination" and "the new conservatism," those Siamese twins of cultural adaptation, the intellectuals themselves were beginning to cast a warm eye on that restrained yet elegant style of life which Stevenson so beautifully embodied. It seems a blunder of history that it had to be Eisenhower, a country boy turned warrior, who became President of a University graced by such figures of worldly cultivation as Gilbert Highet and Jacques Barzun. Does it take any effort of the imagination to *see* Stevenson presiding at a faculty tea in Morningside Heights?

Just as Stevenson bewitched the intellectuals by miming, from on high, their political impulses, so did he fail to attract very much enthusiasm among the workers. By and large they voted for him, but with little of the fervor they had felt for Roosevelt and Truman. At one time Roosevelt had seemed a savior, a man who crossed the social tracks never to return. Truman was one of the plebes, and after his triumph over Dewey there was a remarkable elation in the Detroit auto plants for the workers felt, and with some reason, that they had put Truman in the White House. To some extent, the suspicion of Stevenson indicated the usual anti-intellectualism, but this could hardly have been the whole cause, since I'm told that even among those secondary UAW officials who make an effort to avoid the more obvious forms of anti-intellectualism there was a distinct coolness toward Stevenson. He was admired for his cleverness and praised for his vocabulary, which was large for a presidential candidate; but he was clearly not one of "the people," he didn't pretend to be, he was the candidate who would rise above *mere* group interests.

Stevenson was the first of the liberal candidates in the post-Wilson era who made no effort to align himself with the plebeian tradition or with plebeian sentiments; Stevenson was the candidate whom the intellectuals, trying hard to remove plebeian stains, admired most. There is no way of "proving" this to be a causal relationship, but it would be naive to suppose it a mere coincidence.

II

But there were other, more important reasons. To understand why the ADA, for example, was so enthusiastic about Stevenson it would be well to remember that originally it was enthusiastic about Eisenhower. This fact the ADA would as soon forget, but for its own good we should be so unkind as not to let it. After the election Arthur Schlesinger

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Jr. wrote a slashing piece for *Partisan Review* about the troubles and timidities of liberals in a nation that had not chosen Stevenson; had he discussed why the ADA, in which he is a leading figure, had first proposed Eisenhower, his article would have been an act of high courage.

It may be argued that the ADA acted from ignorance, that it did not know how mediocre and reactionary Eisenhower would prove to be. That must certainly be true. Had the ADA favored Eisenhower with full knowledge that he would soon show himself a political weakling and a captive of Big Business, it would not have been a liberal organization at all; it would have been a conservative or reactionary one. What made it, characteristically, a *liberal* organization was that it stood ready to support a man about whom it knew nothing except that he had been, it was reliably said, a competent general.

Yet there seems to me to have been a certain unconscious consistency, if not a very strong devotion to liberal principles, in the ADA endorsements of both Eisenhower and Stevenson. Consider, by way of introduction, the following points:

1) In a mild way, Eisenhower's political appeal was of the kind called "Bonapartist." Appearing at a moment of national bewilderment, when the Korean War seemed likely to continue for ever and the Truman administration was shown to be shot through with corruption, Eisenhower, that stern yet homely figure, could speak as one who was not a professional "politician" yet "sound" in his views, a man alive to every need yet beyond the claim of any class or group. He was an unknown quantity, a chaste vessel into which every voter could pour his own desires. People voted for Eisenhower not merely because he promised to clean up the mess or because he satisfied the conservative moods of the new managerial strata; they chose him because he, in his stammering inscrutability, would relieve them of their burdens and take upon himself the whole intolerable weight of the nation. Traditionally, this has been the appeal of the Bonapartist leader. I do not mean to imply that Eisenhower had dictatorial ambitions, merely that he won because he was endowed, in the public eye, with the supra-class characteristics of the Bonapartist leader.

2) The favorite theory, at the moment, of American liberals about the nature of our society is advanced in economic terms by Kenneth Galbraith ("countervailing powers") and in more general terms by Daniel Bell. The Marxist scheme of a conflict between two major classes, says Bell, does not apply very well to America: here, instead of a class struggle we have a jockeying among competing yet not incompatible power groups or interest blocs (labor, farmers, business, veterans, minority groups, the aged, etc.). Instead of ruling class and ruled we have a sharing, with desirable friction, of political power. I have argued elsewhere that Bell's theory is inadequate

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because it fails to recognize those patterns of subordination among interest blocs which depend upon relationships of social classes; but I fancy that neither Bell nor those who agree with him are likely to heed this criticism. . . . The theory he advances is perfectly adjusted to, as it is a faithful reflection of, a moment of social stasis resulting from the full production of a war economy. It is a theory that replaces the image of basic social conflict with an image of controlled or controllable social competition among peer groups. Nothing is at present more likely to appeal to liberal intellectuals. Even those who have never heard of Gailbraith or Bell hold similar views.

3) But if American society consists of an essentially healthy jostling among equally hearty social appetities, where do the intellectuals come in? Which is *their* interest group? They are too weak to stand independently, and at present are largely disinclined to stand in alliance with any other group. More important, what happens, given this theory of society, to the *ideal* claims and aspirations of the intellectuals, those claims and aspirations that are so deeply ingrained in their tradition? One may feel comfortable in the kind of society described by Bell but one can hardly find it a cause for enthusiasm. In the past, when radical intellectuals identified with the working class, it was with the expectation and hope that the working class, preparing the way for a new society, would abolish itself in common with all other social classes. But if today the struggle of labor, or any other social group, is merely for a little more of the contaminated swill —well, all right; but it can hardly stimulate those latent impulses toward the *ideal* which the intellectuals cannot quite (though they try hard enough) obliterate in themselves.

What happens now if we bring together these three observations? The appetite for a Bonapartist leader above classes was quite prevalent in this country in the period before the election; it was shared by the liberals, e.g., the ADA's endorsement of Eisenhower not despite but because of its ignorance of his social views. At the same time the liberal intellectuals, committed to a theory of American society that is "realistic" in the worst sense of the word, found themselves without a social place or tie, yet with an appetite for "transcending" even while retaining the theory of interest blocs. This appetite, in turn, is related to and perhaps is an aspect of that yearning for a social savior I have previously mentioned.

A striking characteristic of Stevenson's campaign, as distinct from Roosevelt's or Truman's, was that he did not speak in the name of the poor or the workers or "one third of the nation." The conservative press was always delighted to praise him for not indulging in Truman's "demagogy," that is, for not employing Truman's "anti-plutocrat" vocabulary. Whenever Stevenson spoke before a special interest group he went

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out of his way to declare himself not merely *for* it, like any politician, but also *above* it—the mark of a statesman, no doubt. Somehow he, Stevenson, represented no less than "the people as a whole." In a way that he did not and could not specify, he and the Democratic Party were to provide a universal ideological binder in our society of competing yet not basically conflicting interests. Thus it was that Stevenson made it possible for the liberal intellectuals to see themselves as both realists and idealists at the same time: they could sanction a theory that American liberalism meant little more than the proper regulation of a division of the social spoils while yet invoking, through Stevenson's soaring rhetoric, a vision of that good society which once, long ago, had some actual relationship to liberal politics.

A psychological equation can now be set up: the surrender of the managerial middle class to Eisenhower is as the surrender of the intellectuals to Stevenson. But some qualifications are necessary: the middle class had no critical tradition to abandon and when it saw Eisenhower as its patron it was not far from wrong. Both groups, however, succumbed to their respective heroes with an alarmingly naive faith, and in no way more alarming than for what it suggests of their future political behavior.

III

It would be easy to run through Stevenson's speeches and point to the many patches of shabbiness and cant which show him to be not quite the Knight of Principle his intellectual admirers took him for. Let me cite only a few examples. Stevenson's evidently sincere devotion to civil liberties was badly compromised by his readiness to support the Smith Act and by his praise of Truman for having "put the leaders of the Communist Party in this country where they belong—behind bars," (as if *that* were any solution to the problem of Stalinism, or of civil liberties!) His advocacy of Civil Rights legislation was painfully qualified by his prolonged silence about the opposition of his running mate Sparkman to such legislation. His innumerable references to the split of the Republican Party into several parties seem rather cheap when one notices his refusal to face the equally obvious fact that the Democratic Party is also and indeed far more seriously split. His friendly references to the Negroes must be set against his shameful remarks in a Richmond, Virginia, speech where he placed "anti-Southernism" on a place of equal abhorrence with "anti-Negroism." His courage in jibing at professional patrioteers at the American Legion convention is contaminated by such nonsense as his declaration that "Legionnaires are united by memories of war. Therefore, no group is more devoted to peace." (That *therefore* is priceless.) And what is one to make of his preposterous declaration that "communist materialism" can-

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not be answered with "a different brand of materialism," a statement worthy of the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale; what is one to make of his utterly disingenuous remarks that the Truman administration should not be blamed for corruption since "corruption is personal and knows no party"—as if corruption might not be more indigenous to one party, or one kind of party, than another. . . .

At this point: impatient interruptions. My liberal friends cry out, After all, Stevenson was the candidate of a major party, which means he was trying to get elected. . . . No doubt. But you can't have it both ways. You can't admire Stevenson as a principled idealist and then justify his evasions on the grounds that he was a candidate. I don't mean to deny that principled people have to make concessions to expediency; but the whole failure of recent liberalism has been precisely its inability to distinguish between expediency within the framework of principle and expediency that undermine and rots away principle. Sometimes one has to blink, but that doesn't mean to keep one's eyes shut.

IV

Only after the election did Stevenson reveal his full inadequacy. His round-the-world tour could be the subject of an article on the relationship between rhetoric and *realpolitik,* but here I would only say that his American admirers might at least have raised a whisper ,or a whimper, of protest when he came out with praise for Chiang-Kai-Shek (which led one political wag to remark: *keep that man away from Madrid*) The breathless reports of Stevenson's tour in *The New Republic* have had a kind of fabulous quality, as if Michael Straight had smuggled himself into Marco Polo's party.

More serious is Stevenson's failure to speak up with any sort of firmness against the Eisenhower administration. Here, one would think, is a golden opportunity for a liberal opposition. This administration of sanctioned mediocrity and open alliance with Big Business; this collection of moral weaklings who tremble every time McCarthy lets out his breath; this incredible group of blunderers and reactionaries—could there be a better target for liberal criticism? But Stevenson is no mere politician, he is a statesman; he is *responsible* and *restrained;* he believes in calling a spade an implement for the lifting of difficult objects.

Why does Stevenson remain silent? Because, writes Richard Rovere, he fears that "the attacks will in many parts of the world be read as a repudiation of American ends rather than as criticism of Administration means." One would think that the only possible way of reasserting "American ends" would be through a prolonged and sharp criticism of "Administration means." But that would be the way of a politician and not of a

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statesman who can quote from William James until the intellectuals quiver with delight. What is perhaps equally disturbing is that Mr. Rovere repeats this sort of thing in a tone of sympathetic understanding, as if to imply that we liberals, so raucous in the past, now possess a statesman too; and Mr. Rovere is announced as an editor of a forthcoming publication to be called *Critic*.

The only intelligent discussion of Stevenson that I have seen comes from an English journalist, G. L. Arnold, who reported on Stevenson's trip through England in *The New Leader*. This report is so germane to my remarks that I would quote at some length:

> . . . The fact is that, to put it bluntly, Stevenson struck the British as unduly anxious to conform with the prevailing American popular mood; and it so happens that this mood has few defenders here, even on the extreme Right or the Tory party, let alone among people further to the left.
>
> . . . [Those who heard Stevenson] had come expecting to hear and see a man who could be trusted to continue the Roosevelt-Truman inheritance in foreign policy. What they got was a more graceful and less bumbling edition of John Foster Dulles.
>
> Again, there was his curious evasiveness about McCarthy. Admittedly he must be getting bored with having to explain that McCarthy is no Hitler, but then no one suggested that. He was simply asked for his views. They amounted to this: that McCarthy's 'methods' were not perhaps all they might be, but that it was a good thing to draw attention to the Communist menace. This was not merely inadequate and evasive; it revealed a curious reluctance to say anything that might cause unpleasantness at home. . . . One can hardly suppose that Stevenson really believes McCarthy is basically doing a good job; in that case, why not say so and thus take some of the poison out of the current anti-American campaign? It is no exaggeration to say that his hearers were hoping, above all, that he would help them to project the image of a genuinely sane and liberal America. They received no assistance from him. What they got was a display of agility in ducking awkward questions.
>
> . . . The general consensus among the initiated was that [Stevenson] seemed a very likable kind of liberal Republican and that it was a pity he could not be included in the Eisenhower Administration. It may, of course, be that the British have an altogether mistaken view of what the Democratic Party is, and that these various puzzled reactions just show our ignorance and naivete. But, such as they are, they suggest that there is a gap between our image of American liberalism and the actual movement that goes by this name. And one begins to suspect that Mr. Stevenson's little bodyguard of friends and admirers, with their literary contacts and facilities for the projection of their views, are not altogether innocent of having allowed this gap to become so wide.

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V

Very likely, for some years to come, American socialists will have no electoral course of their own. We shall probably be confined to the basic job of advancing and clarifying our ideas as to the nature of modern society and the need for a radical social change, and to serving as a radical gadfly to the labor-liberal movement, demanding from it what is at present no small or inglorious thing: that it remain faithful, at least, to the tradition of liberalism. But for the liberal-labor movement to do this, it will have to come into increasingly frequent collision with whatever administration, of whichever party, happens to be in power. In a permanent war economy there are certain to arise grave conflicts between the needs of the bureaucratic state and the masses of trade unionists over issues ranging from civil liberties to taxation. Let but such figures as Walter Reuther and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. stand firm in behalf of their own tradition, and they will have to invigorate their liberalism with far more critical spirit—they will have to make it more radical—than they thus far have.

Even if this were to happen, we would still be far from any basic solutions to our social problems—but then, we are far from seeing it happen. To prod and criticize, in firm but friendly terms, the dominant labor-liberal tendency is not, one must admit, an obviously exciting perspective, certainly not as exciting as that which lies open to the socialists of England, where there is a real possibility of leading a democratic transition to socialism. But it is a perspective that is likely to keep us thoroughly employed. From what we have seen of the liberals in the recent election, we need not worry that they will render criticism from the left superfluous.

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THE CONSERVATIVE MOOD

C. Wright Mills

In the material prosperity of post-war America, as crackpot realism has triumphed in practical affairs, all sorts of writers, from a rather confused variety of viewpoints, have been groping for a conservative ideology.

They have not found it, and they have not managed to create it. What they have found is an absence of mind in politics, and what they have managed to create is a mood.

The psychological heart of this mood is a feeling of powerlessness—but with the old edge taken off, for it is a mood of acceptance and of a relaxation of the political will.

The intellectual core of the groping for conservatism is a giving up of the central goal of the secular impulse in the West: the control through reason of man's fate. It is this goal that has lent continuity to the humanist tradition, re-discovered in the Renaissance, and so strong in nineteenth century American experience. It is this goal that has been the major impulse of classic liberalism and of classic socialism.

The groping for conservative ideas, which signifies the weakening of this impulse, involves the search for tradition rather than reason as guide; the search for some natural aristocracy as an anchor point of tradition and a model of character. Sooner or later, those who would give up this impulse must take up the neo-Burkeian defense of irrationality, for that is, in fact, the only possible core of a genuinely conservative ideology. And it is not possible, I believe, to establish such an ideology in the United States.

I

Russell Kirk's "prolonged essay in definition" (*The Conservative Mind*) is the most explicit attempt to translate the conservative mood into conservative ideas. His work, however, does not succeed in the translation it attempts. When we examine it carefully we find that it is largely assertion, without arguable support, and that it seems rather irrelevant to

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modern realities, and not very useful as a guideline of political conduct and policy:

1: The conservative, we are told, believes that "divine intent rules society," man being incapable of grasping by his reason the great forces that prevail. Along with this, he believes that change must be slow and that "providence is the proper instrument for change," the test of a statesman being his "cognizance of the real tendency of Providential social forces."

2: The conservative has an affection for "the variety and mystery of traditional life" perhaps most of all because he believes that "tradition and sound prejudices" check man's presumptuous will and archaic impulse.

3: "Society," the conservative holds, "longs for leadership," and there are "natural distinctions" among men which form a natural order of classes and powers.

When we hold these points close together, we can understand each of them more clearly: they seem to mean that tradition is sacred, that it is through tradition that the real social tendencies of Providence are displayed, and that therefore tradition must be our guide-line. For whatever is traditional not only represents the accumulated wisdom of the ages but exists by "divine intent."

Naturally we must ask how we are to know which traditions are instruments of Providence? Which prejudices are "sound?" Which of the events and changes all around us are by divine intent? But the third point is an attempted answer: If we do not destroy the natural order of classes and the hierarchy of powers, we shall have superiors and leaders to tell us. If we uphold these natural distinctions, and in fact resuscitate older ones, the leaders for whom we long will decide.

II

It is pertinent to ask Mr. Kirk at what moment the highly conscious contrivances of the founding fathers became traditional and thus sanctified? And does he believe that society in the U. S.—before the progressive movement and before the New Deal reforms—represented anything akin to what he would call orders and classes based on "natural distinctions?" If not, then what and where is the model he would have us cherish? And does he believe that the campaign conservatives—to use the phrase of John Crowe Ransom—who now man the political institutions of the U. S., do or do not represent the Providential intent which he seeks? How are we to know if they do or do not, or to what extent which of these do?

Insofar as the conservative consistently defends the irrationality of tradition against the powers of human reason, insofar as he denies the legitimacy of man's attempt collectively to build his own world and indi-

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vidually to control his own fate, then he cannot bring in reason again as a means of choosing among traditions, of deciding which changes are providential and which are evil forces. He cannot provide any rational guide in our choice of which leaders grasp Providence and act it out and which are reformers and levelers. In the end, the conservative is left with one single principle: the principle of gratefully accepting the leadership of some set of men whom he considers a received and sanctified elite. If such men were *there* for all to recognize, the conservative could at least be socially clear. But as it is, there is no guide-line within this view to help us decide which contenders for the natural distinction are genuine and which are not.

III

Conservatism, as Karl Mannheim makes clear, translates the unreflecting reactions of traditionalism into the sphere of conscious reflection. Conservatism is traditionalism become self-conscious and elaborated and forensic. A noble aristocracy, a peasantry, a petty-bourgeoisie with guild inheritance—that is what has been needed for a conservative ideology and that is what Prussia in the early nineteenth century had. It was to the spell of tradition among these surviving elements of a pre-industrial society that conservatism could appeal. The Prussian upper classes lacked the elasticity of the English, and their country lacked an important middle class. Accordingly, they could avoid the English gradualism and the blurring of clear-cut ideologies in parliamentary compromises. In addition, caught between military neighbors, their military set could become a key element in Prussian society. Burke was the stimulus, but it was the German elaboration of his response to the French Revolution that resulted in a fully developed conservatism, sharply polarized against liberalism.*

If England already softened conservative thought with liberal elements, in America, liberalism—and the middle classes that bore it as a deep-seated style of thought—has been so paramount as to preclude any flowering of genuinely conservative ideology.

Here, from their beginnings the middle classes have been predominant —in class and in status and in power.** There is one consequence of this simple fact that goes far to explain why there can be no genuinely conservative ideology in the United States:

There is simply no stratum or group in the population that is of any political consequence to whose traditions conservatism could appeal. All

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* Cf. Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," *Essays in Sociology and Social Psychology* (Ed. and Trans. by Paul Kechskemiti. New York: Oxford, 1953).

** For an elaboration of the factors in the triumph of liberalism in the U. S., see Gerth and Mills, *Character and Social Structure* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1953, pp. 464-472).

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major sections and strata have taken on, in various degrees and ways, the coloration of a middle-class liberal ethos.

IV

The greatest problem of those American writers who would think out a conservative ideology of any political relevance is simply the need to locate the set of people and to make clear the interests that their ideology would serve. There are those, of course, who deny that politics has to do with a struggle for power, but they are of no direct concern to politics as we know it or can imagine it. There are also those who deny that political philosophies are most readily understood as symbols of legitimation, that they have to do with the defense and the attack of powers-that-be or of would-be powers; but by this denial a writer makes himself rather irrelevant to the intellectual features of the public decisions and debates that confront us.

The yearning for conservative tradition, when taken seriously, is bound to be a yearning for the authority of an aristocracy. For without such a more or less fixed and visible social anchor for tradition and for hierarchy, for models of conduct in private and in public life, that are tangible to the senses, there can be no conservatism worthy of the name. And it is just here —at the central demand of conservatism—that most American publicists of the conservative yen become embarrassed. This embarrassment is in part due to a fear of confronting and going against the all-pervading liberal rhetoric; but it is also due to three facts about the American upper class:

First, American writers have no pre-capitalist elite to draw upon, even in fond remembrance. Mr. Kirk, for example, cannot, as European writers have been able to do, contrast such hold-overs from feudalism, however modified, with the vulgarity of capitalist upper elements. The South, when it displayed an "aristocracy" was a region not a nation, and its "aristocrats," however rural, were as much a part of capitalist society as were the New England upper strata.

Second, the very rich in America are culturally among the very poor, and are probably growing even more so. The only dimension of experience for which they have been models to which serious conservatives might point is the material one of money-making and money-keeping. Material success is their sole basis of authority.

Third, alongside the very rich, and supplanting them as popular models, are the synthetic celebrities of national glamor who often make a virtue out of cultural poverty and political illiteracy. By their very nature they are transient figures of the mass means of distraction rather than sources of authority and anchors of traditional continuity.

Fourth, it is virtually a condition of coming to the top in the American

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political economy that one learns to use and use frequently a liberal rhetoric, for that is the common denominator of all proper and successful spokesmen.

There are, accordingly, no social strata which serious minds with conservative yens might celebrate as models of excellence and which stand in contrast to the American confusion the conservatives would deplore.

V

The American alternative for those interested in a conservative ideology seems to be (1) to go ahead—as Mallock, for example, in his 1898 argument with Spencer did—and defend the capitalist upper classes, or (2) to become socially vague and speak generally of a "natural aristocracy" or a "self-selected elite" which has nothing to do with existing social orders, classes and powers.

The first is no longer so popular among free writers, although every little tendency or chance to do it is promptly seized upon by conservative publicists and translated into such pages as those of *Fortune* magazine. But, more importantly, if it is useful ideologically it must be a dynamic notion and hence no fit anchor for tradition. On the contrary, the capitalist elite is always, in the folklore and sometimes in the reality of capitalism, composed of self-making men who smash tradition to rise to the top by strictly personal accomplishments.

The second alternative is now the more popular. In their need for an aristocracy, the conservative thinkers become grandly vague and very general. They are slippery about the aristocrat; generalizing the idea, they make it moral rather than socially firm and specific. In the name of "genuine democracy" or "liberal conservatism" they stretch the idea of aristocracy in a quite meaningless way, and so, in the end, all truly democratic citizens become aristocrats. Aristocracy becomes a scatter of morally superior persons rather than a strategically located class. So it is with Ortega y Gasset and so it is with Peter Viereck, who writes that it is not "the Aristocratic class" that is valuable but "the aristocratic spirit"—which, with its decorum and *noblesse oblige,* is "open to all, regardless of class."

This is not satisfactory because it provides no widely accepted criteria for judging who is elite and who is not. Moreover, it does not have to do with the existing facts of power and hence is politically irrelevant. And it involves a mobile situation; the self-selecting elite can be no fixed anchor. Some have tried to find a way to hold onto such a view, as it were secretly, not stating it directly, but holding it as a latest assumption while talking about, not the elite, but "the mass." That, however, is dangerous, for again, it goes so squarely against the liberal rhetoric which requires a continual flattery of the citizens.

Both these alternatives, in fact, end up not with an elite that is anchored

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in a tradition and hierarchy but with dynamic and ever-changing elite continually struggling to the top in an expanding society. There is simply no socially, much less politically, recognized traditional elite and there is no tradition. Moreover, whatever else it may be, tradition is something you cannot create. You can only uphold it when it exists. And now there is no spell of unbroken tradition upon which modern society is or can be steadily based. Accordingly, the conservative cannot confuse greatness with mere duration, cannot decide the competition of values by a mere endurance contest.

VI

In one of its two major forms, as instanced by Mr. Kirk, the defense of irrationality rests upon pre-capitalist, in fact pre-industrial, bases: it is simply the image of a society in which authority is legitimated by traditionalism and interpreted by a recognized aristocracy.

In its other major form the defense rests upon what is perhaps the key point in classic liberal capitalism: it is the image of a society in which authority is at a minimum because it is guided by the autonomous forces of the magic market. In this view, providence becomes the unseen hand of the market; for in secular guise Providence refers to a faith that the unintended consequences of many wills form a pattern, and that this pattern ought to be allowed to work itself out.

In contrast to classic conservatism, this conservative liberalism, as a call to relax the urge to rational planning, is very deep in the American grain. Not wishing to be disturbed over moral issues of the political economy, Americans cling all the more to the idea that the government is an automatic machine, regulated by a balancing out of competing interests. This image of government is simply carried over from the image of the economy: in both we arrive at equilibrium by the pulling and hauling of each individual or group for their own interests, restrained only by legalistic and amoral interpretation of what the law allows.

George Graham has noted that although Americans think representative government a wonderful thing, they hold that representatives are merely "politicians" who as a class are of a fairly low order; that although they willingly honor the dead statesmen of the past, they dishonor the politicians of the present. Professor Graham infers from this, as well as other facts, that "perhaps what Americans yearn for is a complete mechanization of politics. Not a dictator but a political automat is the subconscious ideal," something that will measure up "to the modern standards of being fully automatic and completely impersonal."*

In the United States the economic order has been predominant among institutions, and therefore the types of men and their characteristic traits

* *Morals in American Politics.* (New York: Random House, 1953, p. 4).

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are best interpreted in terms of the evolving economic system. In turn, the top men, almost regardless of how top is defined, have always included in one way or another those who are at the top of the economic system.

Insofar as one can find a clue to the basic impulse of the Eisenhower administration, it is the attempt to carry out this sacrifice of politics to the free dominance of economic institutions and their key personnel. It is a difficult task, perhaps even one that only crackpot realists would attempt, for now depression and wars, as well as other perils and complications of modern life, have greatly enlarged the federal government and made it an unwieldy instrument.

At the center of their ideology, the capitalist upper circles and their outlying publicists have had and do have only one political idea: it is the idea of an automatic political economy. This is best known to us as simply the practical conservatism of the anti-New Dealers during the Thirties of which the late Senator Robert Taft was perhaps the prime exemplar. It has been given new life by the frightening spectacle of the enlarged, totalitarian states of Germany yesterday and Russia today. And now it has become the only socially anchored conservative rhetoric in the American managerial elite, who now blend with the formal political directorate.

VII

And yet on the practical political level the conservative groping has not been much more than a set of negative reactions to any signs of "liberal" or "progressive" policies or men. Conservatives have protested their individual rights rather than any common duties. Such duties as they have set forth—the trusteeship of big corporations, for example—have been all too transparently cloaks for harder and narrower interests. For a dozen years, the New and Fair Deals carried forth a series of specific personalities and policies and agencies that have been the shifting targets of conservative bile. Yet, for electoral purposes, that bile had to be ejected into the *"progressive"* atmosphere carried forth and sustained by the New Deal.

American conservatives have not set forth any conservative ideology. They are conservative in mood and conservative in practice but they have no conservative ideology. They have had no connection with the fountainheads of modern conservative thought. In becoming aware of their power they have not elaborated that awareness into a conscious ideology. Perhaps it is easiest for people to be conservative when they have no sense of what conservatism means, no sense of the conservative present as being only one alternative to what the future might be. For if one cannot say that conservatism is unconsciousness, certainly conservatives are often happily unconscious.

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VIII

The poverty of mind in U. S. politics is evidenced in practice by the fact that the campaign liberals have no aim other than to hold to the general course of the New and Fair Deals, and no real ideas about extending these administrative programs. The campaign conservatives, holding firmly to utopian capitalism (with its small, passive government and its automatic economy), have come up against the same facts as the liberals and in facing them have behaved very similarly. They have no real ideas about how to jettison the welfare state and the managed war economy.

In the meantime both use the same liberal rhetoric, largely completed before Lincoln's death, to hold matters in stalemate. Neither party has a political vocabulary—much less political policies—that are up-to-date with the events, problems and structure of modern life. Neither party challenges the other in the realm of ideas, nor offers clear-cut alternatives to the electorate. Neither can learn nor will learn anything from classic conservatism of Mr. Kirk's variety. They are both liberal in rhetoric, traditional in intention, expedient in practice.

You can no more build a coherent conservative outlook and policy on a coalition of big, medium and small business, higher white collar employees and professional people, farmers and a divided South than you could build a racial outlook and policy on a coalition of big city machines, small business men, lower white collar people, a split and timid labor world, farmers and a divided South.

Within each party and between them there is political stalemate. Out of two such melanges, you cannot even sort out consistent sets of interests and issues, much less develop coherent policies, much less organize ideological guidelines for public debate and private reflection.

This means, for one thing, that "politics" goes on only within and between a sort of administrative fumbling. The fumbles are expedient. And the drift that they add up to leads practically all sensitive observers to construct images of the future that are images of horror.

IX

One thinks of the attempt to create a conservative ideology in the United States as a little playful luxury a few writers will toy with for a while, rather than a serious effort to work out a coherent view of the world they live in and the demands they would make of it as political men.

More interesting than the ideas of these would-be conservative writers is the very high ratio of publicity to ideas. This is of course a characteristic of fashions and fads, and there is no doubt that the conservative moods are now fashionable. But I do not think we can explain intellectual fashions, in particular this one, by the dialectic that runs through intellectual discourse,

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nor by the ready seizure by vested interests of ideas and moods that promise to justify their power and their policies.

For one thing, policy makers often do not usually feel the need for even reading, much less using in public, much less thinking about, the conservative philosophies. When Robert Taft, before his death, was asked if he had read Russell Kirk's book, he replied that he did not have much time for books. Like the radical writers of the previous decade, conservative writers of the 40's and 50's are not in firm touch with power elites or policy makers.

Another reason America has no conservative ideology is that it has no radical opposition. Since there is no radical party, those who benefit most from such goods and powers of life as are available have felt no need to elaborate a conservative defense of their positions. For conservatism is not the mere carrying on of traditions or defense of existing interests: it is a becoming aware of tradition and interests and elaborating them into an outlook, tall with principle. And this happens usually only when the tradition and the top position which benefit from it are really attacked.

Neither a radical ideology nor a conservative ideology but a liberal rhetoric has provided the terms of all issues and conflicts. In its generic ambiguities and generality of term this rhetoric has obfuscated hard issues and made possible a historical development without benefit of hard conflict of idea. The prevalence of this liberal rhetoric has also meant that thought in any wide meaning of the term has been largely irrelevant to such politics as have been visible.

Underneath the immediate groping for conservatism there is, of course, the prosperity that has dulled any deeper political appetite in America's post-war period. It is true that this prosperity does not rest upon an economy solidly on its own feet, and that for many citizens it is not so pleasant as they had probably imagined. For it is a prosperity that is underpinned politically by a seemingly permanent war economy, and socially by combined incomes. Still, no matter how partial or how phoney, by old fashioned standards the atmosphere is one of prosperity.

It is true, of course, that the radicalism of western humanism did not and does not depend for its nerve or its muscle upon fluctuations of material well-being. For those who are of this persuasion are as interested in the level of public sensibility and the quality of everyday life as in the material volume and distribution of commodities. Still, for many, this prosperity, no matter how vulgar, has been an obstacle to any cultural, much less political, protest.

More specific than this general climate of prosperity has been the tiredness of the liberal, living off the worn-out rubble of his rhetoric; and, along with this, the disappointment of the radical, from the turns of Soviet

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institutions away from their early promise to all the defeats that have followed in the thirty years of crisis and the deflation of radicalism.

The tiredness of the liberal and the deflation of radicalism are in themselves causes of the search for some kind of a more conservative point of view. It is good, many seem to feel, to relax and to accept. To undo the bow and to fondle the bowstring. It is good also, perhaps, because of the generally flush state of the writers and thinkers, for we should not forget that American intellectuals, however we may define them, are also personally involved in the general level of prosperity. To this we must also add the plain and fancy fright of many who once spoke boldly; the attacks upon civil liberties have touched deeply their anxieties and have prodded them to search for new modes of acceptance.

These are sources of the conservative impulse from the standpoint of the old left and liberal centers—to which most of the intellectuals have felt themselves to belong. From the right of center, there have also been impulses—impulses that were always there, perhaps, but which have come out into large print and ample publicity only in the post-war epoch. First of all there are interests which no matter what their prosperity require defending, primarily large business interests, and along with this, there is the need, which is felt by many spokesmen and scholars as great, for cultural prestige abroad. One prime result of the increased travel abroad by scholars, stemming from the anti-American rebuffs they have experienced, is the need to defend in some terms the goodness of American life. And these little episodes have occurred in a large context of power: a context in which the economic and military and political power of the U. S. greatly exceeds her cultural prestige, and is so felt by the more acute politicians and statesmen at home and abroad.

The campaign conservatives will continue to go in for public relations more than for ideology. Just now they do not really feel the need for any ideology; later a conservative ideology of the kinds we have been discussing will appeal to no one. The radical humanist will continue to believe that men collectively can and ought to be their own history-makers and that men individually can to some extent and should try fully to create their own biographies. For those who still retain this minimum definition, the current attempts to create a conservative ideology do not constitute any real problem.

In the meantime, political decisions are occurring, as it were, without benefit of political ideas; mind and reality are two separate realms; America —a conservative country without any conservative ideology—appears before the world a naked and arbitrary power.

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EAST GERMANY: THE UPRISING OF JUNE 17

H. Brand

The June uprising in East Germany was not merely an incident in the resistance that has become part of daily life in the satellite areas; for this time the whole character of the resistance was suddenly, dramatically lifted to a new stage. The elementary, merely "convulsive" level of opposition to totalitarianism was left behind; the uprising reintegrated the consciousness of the workers, reaffirmed their role as a class, and in doing so, posed with unprecedented sharpness the problem of the future of Stalinist totalitarianism. Never again can Stalinism be what it was prior to the uprising: the memory of June 1953 has become in Europe a symbol, a hope, a portent.

I

Given both the ruthlessness and subtlety of Stalinist control, how could such a thing happen? The uprising had obviously not been "staged"; its leaders attested to its spontaneity; the improvised nature of all organized activity on June 16 in Berlin and on June 17 everywhere in Eastern Germany is indubitable. The Stalinists have spoken of "fascist provocateurs," of the "Ostbureau" of the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) but only as at most "provoking" the strikes, not as organizing them. The Western press frequently alluded to an "underground" in Eastern Germany but this hypothesis proved totally inadequate for explaining the events: if the illegal groups in Eastern Germany may be called an "underground," how were they related to the uprising? Were there "underground cells" in *all* the 150 localities where strikes and demonstrations took place, cells which had instructions from some central body to bring the workers into motion at a pre-determined hour and to see to it that the uprising would not, by provocative actions, become a bloodbath and that, at the same time, maximum participation would be assured? Is it likely that

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such an organization would have remained in complete obscurity? There is no evidence for the claim that the June events in East Berlin were planned or directed by a political organization.*

Yet, that the uprising *was* organized, that it was characterized by high discipline, that there was self-policing which made mob actions practically impossible—this is also undeniable. The behavior of the participants was clearly formed by a political consciousness to which they gave continuous expression. The entire working class of East Berlin, as well as that of Leipzig, Dresden, Magdeburg and the great industrial district of which the center is Halle—from all directions they marched upon the government centers, scribbling their slogans upon banners hitherto used for Stalinist propaganda.** A radio car which the Stalinist-controlled Socialist Unity Party (SED) had sent to propagandize among the marchers was seized, used by the latter and afterwards restored to the driver. During its use those who proved unable to speak well were unceremoniously replaced until the right man was found. Anyone unfortunate enough to be caught looting was mercilessly beaten and his loot returned. Spokesmen arose from the mass of workers whenever the occasion demanded it, expressing their thoughts with aptness, precision and utter fearlessness.

The immediate cause of the uprising was the SED's policy reversals announced on June 11, which included a number of important concessions to the private sector of the East German economy but none whatever to the workers whose norms had been raised 10 per cent on May 28. It is true that "the pre-history of the 16-17th June is the history of this increase in norms" (*Der Monat*), but in order to elucidate the motives behind the uprising, our presentation must go beyond, although it cannot omit, the economic issues.

The history of June 17 is the history of the struggle of the East Ger-

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* "There was nothing which allowed the powerful outbreak of the June uprising to be expected. In a city in which numerous observers of the political situation—journalists, officials, representatives of the Western occupation powers—constantly follow the events in smallest detail, almost all those acquainted with the situation were taken with complete surprise." ("Der Aufstand im Juni," *Der Monat*, Sept. 1953). But even the very leaders of individual uprisings were struck by the suddenness with which they occurred. See especially the article by J. P. O'Donnell on the events in Halle, in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Aug. 22, 1953; and that of J. Wechsberg, on the strike at the Leuna works in the *New Yorker*, Aug 29, 1953.

** A construction worker participating in the march of his colleagues from the building sites in the Stalin Allee in Berlin is quoted (in *Der Monat*, Sept. and Oct., 1953, p. 605): ". . . It was as if all of us had known how we could drive our affair forward. Our march still had no leadership. One of us called: 'Let's march to the government quarters.' All agreed. I shouted: 'If we go there let's not go by the shortest route. We've got to take along the workers from the State Opera [a construction project—HB].' All consented." As the marching workers passed the Soviet embassy: "Silently, as a sign of contempt, we marched by. As an afterthought I must say that this, too, was the smartest thing we could have done. Perhaps the Russians would have intervened much earlier otherwise."

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man workers against Stalinism. The forms of this struggle, in turn, were determined by 1) the tradition of self-activity of the German workers; 2) the relatively slow growth of the working class in East Germany, that is, its cohesion and stability.

In referring to the tradition of self-activity among the German workers, it is legitimate to question whether, after twenty years of totalitarian rule during which its leadership was exterminated or dispersed, one may still speak of a "tradition." Obviously, traditions of ideology and of organizational self-government become atrophied if they lack highly schooled bearers and if they are not sustained through time. Yet the forms taken by the events of June 17 cannot be explained if it is assumed that these traditions had died out and that the "material conditions" in which the workers lived were themselves enough to force them into conflict with the oppressive SED regime.*

In the USSR these "material conditions" are far more stringent, not only relatively but also absolutely. However, here the decimation of the more advanced members of the working class was carried out far more radically than by Hitler in Germany; furthermore, the constant influx of peasants into the working class has impeded the sense of class solidarity. Combined with these two factors is the disorienting influence of Stalinist ideology whose claim to being heir to the Russian revolution cannot be openly challenged in Russia. In Germany, on the other hand, the working class has grown slowly over a number of decades, acquiring its experience as an autonomous labor movement in the environment of an industrially and culturally advanced population which itself frequently had strong socialist sympathies.

The nature of the German state prior to World War I, based as it was upon an authoritarian stratum of civil servants and military officers, made for a labor movement not merely strong in the obvious quantitative sense but whose cohesive force resided in its socialist ideology. Because of the conditions of the mass of the workers, the "philosophy" of business unionism never found widespread acceptance in Germany. This fact, in turn, consistently limited the power of the trade union and Social Democratic hierarchies and prevented them from establishing the degree of control over the workers which the labor leadership of the United States has

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* "The center of the East-zonal industry is located in the great Middle-German brown-coal region. Here, in Halle, Wolfen, Merseburg, Bitterfeld, Leuna, Schkopau, were also the centers of the uprising, and in this region with its old workers and trade union tradition, there evolved out of the undirected popular movement the first forms of leadership, who indeed for a short period took over executive power and who undoubtedly could have brought about the overthrow of the regime, if the intervention of the occupation troops had not occurred." (*Monat,* op. cit., Oct. 1953, p. 51.)

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won. Consequently, there was in the German labor movement a constant replacement of rank-and-file leadership, a constant if at times not very spectacular surging up from below of new ideas and new spokesmen.

If, then, we speak of the self-activity of the German workers, we have in mind *their ability to act in an organized form but without formal organization; to act in accordance with political aims but in the absence of formal political leadership.* This ability was impressively demonstrated in the period of 1916-1921, when the working class frequently engaged in large scale actions without and sometimes against its official leadership.* It is impossible to overstate the blow suffered by German society under Nazism. Nevertheless, due perhaps to the relative brevity of the Nazi dictatorship, the structure of German society was but superficially affected. This is shown by its pattern of development after 1945. The resurgence of the labor movement as a central factor in the revival of the productive plant after 1945 could not have taken place without the existence of considerable numbers of workers who had a first-hand knowledge of the need and value of organization.

II

The internal instability of the SED is probably not a matter of great concern to its Soviet overlords. Too strong a German Stalinist party is not and never was in their interest, if only because of the near-impossibility of controlling it. More immediately, the weakness of the German SED derived from its inability to digest the Social Democrats who were compelled, through Russian pressure, to merge with the Communist Party in April 1946. The German Stalinists did not, to be sure, proceed in a political vacuum at the time: the merger, though forced, was based on genuine sentiment in favor of working class unity, the absence of which in 1933 was held responsible for Hitler's success. Similarly, the founding of the German Trade Union Federation (FDGB), though decreed in 1945 by Marshal Zhukov, was welcomed by many East German workers. Works councils were re-created and granted, formally, wide latitude of "co-determination" in the shops.

That the SED and FDGB were forged into effective, if not always reliable instruments of Soviet policy is a matter of common knowledge. The concern of the Stalinists was to involve and implicate as many actually or potentially capable elements in the execution of their policy as they could; thus to alienate them from the masses who were to bear the burden of these policies; and at the same time to give them a stake in the security and wel-

* The question which at this point inevitably arises as to why the German workers were unable to resist the rise of Hitler presents too many complexities to be discussed here.

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fare of the apparatus. While the apparatus was, consciously as well as by the logic of its position, alienated from the working masses, it could not afford to be isolated from them; these masses had to become and remain "organized" by and into the apparatus, *they had to be demoralized by implicating them in their own slavery*—by engineering unanimous votes in favor of norm increases, for example. The ever-present threat of the spontaneous formation of autonomous groups of workers confronting the apparatus had to be tirelessly repressed. It is this latter problem which proved an insuperable difficulty for the German Stalinists. The impulse of workers to organize themselves has been elementary and irrepressible throughout the history of industrialism and must be regarded as a condition of their existence. Today there can be no question of destroying the unions; rather, it is one of "controlling" them. For the Stalinists, the workers' organizations constitute "transmission belts" between the workers and "their" state. The worker is thus a wheel, though a vital one, in the machinery of "his" state—a wheel whose motion is determined by the transmission belt. But in East Germany at least the Stalinists have not succeeded in making machines out of human beings.

THE WORKS COUNCILS which were to be the cells of the FDGB could not be prevented from becoming the means by which the workers sabotaged the Stalinist plans. During 1945-1948, when the fruits of reconstruction were going into east-bound freight trains, the shop councils, by organizing the "theft" of what the members of the shop had produced and selling it on the black market for food and other necessities, helped assure the physical survival of the population. They tended to become autonomous from the FDGB and to assume functions traditionally reserved to the trade unions. The advent of the Marshall Plan and the consequent reconstruction of West Germany prompted the USSR to convert its reparations policy into a long-range policy of integrating the satellites and East Germany into its economic structure; hence a far stricter regime was now introduced in the Soviet zone. The Soviet zone became the "German Democratic Republic" (DDR) in October 1949, with power delegated to its government not by its constituents (rigged elections took place only a year later, in October 1950) but by the Soviet Military Administration which converted itself into a control Commission.

At the same time the Ulbricht regime began to create "a party of the new type" (a party, that is, fashioned strictly on the example of the CPSU). This involved two lines of attack: 1) the party ranks were to be purged of "social democratism"; 2) the party ranks were to be opened to "activists" in industry and agriculture, and to young people. The latter, enjoying greatly expanded educational opportunities and the illusion of security in a

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planned economy, were considered especially susceptible to being integrated into the apparatus.

Furthermore, the influence of Russian-trained and Russian-speaking functionaries increased; old CPers returning from the West found themselves expelled or crowded out. In summer 1950 a new system of membership surveillance was created, and extensive files on the background and associations of members were established. One-year party courses were made compulsory and examination commissions travelled about the zone, weeding out "ideologically weak" elements. The indoctrination of party members represented an untiring and costly effort for the regime: between 1947 and 1950 full-time party schools had graduated some 240,000 functionaries. The effectiveness of this indoctrination, however, can be judged from a statement of the Central Committee of the SED in October 1951: "Anti-sovietism, social democratism, pacifism, cosmopolitanism and the activity of [foreign] agents still prevail [within the party.—H.B.]." And this despite the fact that from November 1950 to July 1951 a thorough investigation of the membership had been taking place and new members had not been admitted.

The SED does not of course desire to be a purely working class party; in order to insure its totalitarian control it must have cadres in all social strata, primarily in the state administration.* But its claim that the working class holds the leading position in East Germany is refuted even by the fact that it is far from being in the leading position within the SED itself. In Saxony, the most highly industrialized province of East Germany, the proportion of workers in the leadership of SED shop units was reported to be on the average only 53 per cent, but in some cases as low as 40 per cent and 30 per cent. The proportion of the administrative employees was, then, representative of the power of the apparatus they incarnated. This was and is indeed a matter of concern to the regime, which would prefer more workers in secondary and tertiary leadership. This, however, is a risk, since such workers soon become spokesmen for their shops, thus undermining the authority of the party and the state. And among those who resigned or were expelled during the "examination period," the great majority was again workers.

Notwithstanding the basic changes both in personnel and structure which the SED underwent from 1949 on; despite intensified ideological

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* "The leading role of the party can be realized only if the cadres of the intellectuals ["Intelligenz"—including engineers, administrators and the like] within our party grow relatively fastest, primarily in the party apparatus but in all the branches of science, technology and the arts." (from "Decisions of the II. Party Conference and the Tasks in the Field of Cadre Policy"; speech of H. Axen, member of the secretariat, Central Committee of SED; in *Neues Deutschland,* Apr. 30, 1953; reproduced in *Ost Probleme,* No. 21, 1953.)

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training of cadres in East Germany as well as in Russia; despite the rejuvenation of its ranks* and replacements by socially backward, more pliable elements, the party could not withstand the disintegrative tendencies within itself that were a consequence of the opposition to its rule by the great majority of East Germans. The evidence for this is provided by the SED leaders themselves, abiding by the standards of "self-criticism" set for it by its Russian sister party.** These statements indicate that ideologically the East German workers had put the SED on the defensive as early as 1950.

Together with the reorganization of the SED along the lines of the CPSU, the FDGB became an open instrument of the regime. The works councils were abolished in 1948 and replaced by the Trade Union Committees (BGL—*Betriebsgewerkschaftsleitung*) whose members were not elected by the workers in the shops, as in the case of the councils, but appointed by the SED from among them. The BGL were immediately engulfed by the workers—until, in 1950, they became openly associated with management. "Let them [the workers—H.B] understand that the responsibility for the realization of the plan and of production is in the hands of management" declared *Neuer Weg,* the SED functionaries' publication, in March 1950. The constitutionally guaranteed right to co-determination was thereby abrogated; but the BGL became isolated islands in a hostile sea.

In the summer of 1950 the Party Congress of the SED decided on the "construction of the bases of socialism" and, hence, the projection of a five-year plan, to commence January 1, 1951. In the fall of 1950, Ulbricht, general secretary of the SED, stated in an address to the FDGB Congress, then convening: "The wage structure is a means to the fulfillment of the plan; the workers must find a new relationship to their work."† This statement foreboded an unprecedented intensive exploitation which the five-year plan

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* The regime holds the youth to be highly susceptible to its advances. One of the functions assigned to the "Free German Youth," the government-sponsored East German youth organization, is that of production surveillance; the very term applied to these youthful surveillance units is military: they are "control posts." It is their task "to struggle first of all against delays in plan fulfillment, waste, bureaucratism, sloppiness and carelessness in order to unfold generalized criticism of the workers regarding all obstructions to the building of socialism." (*Taegliche Rundschau,* May 21, 1953; reproduced in *Ost-Probleme,* No. 24, 1953.)

** "The chief reasons why the basic organizations [of the SED—H.B.] in Berlin have insufficient contact with the population is that some of the comrades have a fear of difficulties. They do not feel themselves sufficiently equipped to deal with the arguments of our opponents." (Ulbricht, 6th conference of the Central Committee, 13th-15th June, 1951.) "When one comes to Berlin as a stranger [from the Soviet zone] it is certainly conspicuous, that so few comrades wear party emblems. On asking them one hears all sorts of excuses." (*Neues Deutschland,* Apr. 13, 1950.) "The attitude of SED-members in Berlin is characterized by their . . . evasion of arguments of social-democratic workers." (*Neues Deutschland,* Jan. 7, 1951.)

† The material on which we base ourselves in the following appears in "The Collective Agreements as System of Exploitation in the Soviet Zone" (title translated from German), published by Executive Committee of SPD, Bonn. The instances of resistance to the agreements are from among those cited in this brochure.

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was to impose upon the workers in a country where strictly economic and technological obstacles to a decent standard of living do not exist.

The "new relationship" of the workers to their work was found for them by the regime, utilizing the experiences of the USSR. It consisted in the imposition of collective agreements to which the partners were supposd to be the local committees of the FDGB and the administration of the industry affected. However, production quotas, norms and wage rates were determined by the minister of the industry concerned, that is, the government. *Neues Deutschland,* central organ of the SED, wrote in the beginning of 1951: "The collective agreements on the shop level must contain the officially determined wage rates." Obviously, this reduced the trade union committees to propaganda agencies of the regime. Shop-wide agreements were eventually superseded by "contracts" between the FDGB unions and the industrial ministries; they were in the nature of directives from which "contracts" between lower-echelon partners could diverge but very little. One of the central provisions in these agreements disallows the total wage fund of all of East German industry to rise by more than 31 per cent over that of 1950 during the entire five-year period while production is to rise by 60 per cent.

In order for these collective agreements to possess legal force, they had to be ratified by the workers; and to get them ratified was the thankless task of FDGB functionaries. The workers everywhere, while wisely shunning political subjects, openly opposed the agreements. Leuna struck for three days in June 1951 against the higher norms and lower real wages provided for in their "contract." The Krupp-Gruson Works at Halle held huge protest meetings; the workers at the Optima Machine Works at Leipzig demonstratively stayed away from the scheduled explanation sessions. At the Schoenebeck (Elbe) Rubber Works SED members were expelled from the party because they allowed themselves to "vacillate under the pressure of the masses." At Zeiss Optical Works in Jena FDGB pressure and police intervention were unable to break the resistance to the "voluntary acceptance" of the "contract" and, as in other instances, it was imposed by fiat. Rudolf Kirchner, second chairman of the FDGB and Moscow-trained, inveighed against functionaries who refused to countersign the agreements. Rudolf Herrnstadt, then the SED propaganda chief, burst out in *Neues Deutschland*: "What misery it is to watch the FDGB functionaries sneak through the shops like intimidated orphans." The functionaries apparently had good reason to make themselves scarce. By October 1951, 2,700 workers had been jailed because of their opposition to the collective agreements. The regime had expected that by summer 1951, 7,300 contracts would be concluded; but only 827 had been deposited with the authorities, of which a large part had never been duly ratified.

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The opposition to the five-year plan was thus a preview of the events of June 17.

One of the chief reasons for the 10 per cent increase in norms decreed by the East German Council of Ministers in May,* after a long period of fruitless agitation demanding that the workers voluntarily raise them, was to curtail the purchasing power of the major consumer segment, the workers. This was necessitated by the crisis in agriculture, which was not only affecting agricultural produce as such but also the supply of consumer goods. The regime chided the ministries in charge of the consumer goods sector for not meeting the needs of the population; but this, of course, arose from notoriously sloppy conditions under which this sector was run as well as from the export of such goods in exchange for food stuffs. At the base of the trouble was the regime's policy of collectivization of agriculture, decided upon by the SED conference in summer 1952. This, combined with increased delivery quotas, non-fulfillment of which was Draconically punished, caused a great exodus from the land. Prior to the 1952 decision, there had been very little collectivization; the regime had apparently not been ready until then to make the necessary provisions for the industrialization of agriculture. Moreover, the regime had hoped for a measure of support from among a peasantry of which large parts owed their holdings to it. Since 87 per cent of all food originated from individually held peasant units, resistance by and flight of the peasants was bound to have grave consequences. In May 1953 there was a shortage of one million tons of potatoes, one-half million tons of grains, .45 million tons of vegetables. Foreseeing these shortages, the regime in April withdrew food ration cards, on which food could be obtained at regulated prices, from about two million persons least able to oppose such a measure effectively: artisans, social security recipients, small traders, etc. This compelled them to purchase at the government-sponsored trading posts where free market prices were charged. Interestingly, on the same day on which the work norms were increased, the food ration cards were restored to these consumers. The norm increase was a device, among its other purposes, to insure early industrialization of agriculture and thus an early "solution" of the agricultural problem.

On June 11, in accordance with decisions made by the SED on June 9, the Council of Ministers suddenly reversed the agricultural policy of

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* "For the productive exploitation of the work day and the increase of work productivity, technically justified, progressive work norms are to be introduced; the struggle for the increase of norms is to be organized." (Decision of Central Committee of SED of Feb. 3, 1953, cited in a long article pressing for higher norms in *Neues Deutschland*, March 13, 1953; reproduced in *Ost-Probleme*, No. 14, 1953.) The statement cited is merely the most authoritative among reams of articles justifying and demanding the increases.

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rapid collectivization; it also made a number of important concessions to the private sector of the East German economy, to pensioners, etc. Its guarantee of "due process" meant that the regime would now seriously attempt to stop the incursions of its apparatus upon the establishments of private traders, manufacturers and farmers. Tax arrears were not to be punished by property confiscation, failures to fulfill delivery quotas were to be treated mildly, farms were to be restored to owners who had deserted them; short-term credit was to be made easily available. On the work norm increase, however, the SED did not reverse itself.

The reasons for these changes in policy cannot be found by looking for any general policy change in the satellites which the Malenkov regime has been said to have instituted.* Rather were they related to the German problem as a whole. The speeches of Eisenhower (April 16) and Churchill (May 11) may have encouraged hopes on the part of the Kremlin that the possibility for a "satisfactory" discussion of the problem of Germany existed. In its own, entirely transparent, manner the Kremlin did not hesitate sharply to countermand the progress of "socialization" (short of such steps as would run afoul of its own requirements) in the Soviet Zone, so as to give evidence of its "good will." The abolition of the Soviet Zone equivalent of High Commissioner and its replacement by an ambassador was possibly a measure taken to placate Ulbricht's indubitable opposition to the policy reversals, at the same time that it was intended to make any future unification of Germany under the aegis of the Big Four a unification of "equals."

III

It would serve no purpose to analyze the contention of the SED leadership that the uprising was "provoked" by "fascists" and "imperialist hirelings." Not only the course of the events themselves but the articles in the SED-controlled press disprove the contention. During the months following June 17 there was no end of complaints about functionaries who hesitate to "explain" to the workers how "wrong" they had been in striking against "their" government,** about party emblems which have

* The currency reform in Czechoslovakia of May 30, the norm increase in East Germany and the drive for higher norms in Poland (see *Trybuna Ludu*, Warsaw, May 10, 1953, cited in *Ost-Probleme*, No. 24, 1953) rather suggest intensification of industrialization related, in large part, to the critical food situation within the USSR, i.e., to collectivization and the partial relief of Soviet industry from heavy industrial production. It is only in Hungary, and that in July, after the events in East Germany and Pilsen, that one can speak of a let-up; and even here it was reluctant and short-lived.

** Said Otto Grotewohl, Minister-President, in a speech to the Central Committee of SED, at its 15th conference, July 24-26, 1953 (*Neues Deutschland*, July 29, reproduced in *Ost-Probleme*, No. 32, 1953): "The open presentation of our mistakes has . . . led, during the weeks since June 17 to the development of a regular community of penitents within the party and the state administration. . . . The party must get out of this mood of penitence. . . . Self-criticism does not mean suicide (*Selbstkritik ist nicht Selbstmord*)."

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inexplicably become lost, about the stubborn inability of the workers to "understand" the SED's "new course" or any of the measures by which its rule has supposedly benefited them. By denouncing a man as a "fascist provocateur" a legal basis for his punishment is created; that is the only reality in this "evaluation" of the uprising.

It is not excluded that after June 17 a split in the leadership of the SED developed between Ulbricht, the secretary-general, and Grotewohl, the co-chairman.* The declaration of the SED of June 23 which represents the official reaction to the June 17 events, reiterated its previous stand, namely, that the changes in policy which were made on June 11 were designed to lead to German unification, that the line which had up to then been followed "did not correspond to the all-German struggle for unity and peace," and that the "situation as a whole" caused this line, which had so far been thought correct, to be viewed in a "new light." As this document shows, Ulbricht, while flexible, was totally unwilling to admit to any "mistakes."

Not so Grotewohl. In a speech on June 24 he declared: "The present situation is the result of a faulty policy on the part of our party. . . ." The major mistakes, according to Grotewohl, were : 1) The accelerated pace of the development of heavy industry which caused a retrogressive movement in the consumer goods sector and therefore higher prices for necessities; 2) the attitude of the party in giving commands to the masses and terrorizing them instead of getting them to "cooperate voluntarily." Thus, what is an adjustment of tactics to Ulbricht is a programmatic error for Grotewohl.

The logical concomitant to Grotewohl's views were those of the former Social Democrat Fechner, the then Minister of Justice. In an interview published in *Neues Deutschland,* June 30 and July 2, Fechner stated: 1) that strike leaders were not liable to punishment; 2) that the right to strike was constitutionally guaranteed; 3) that the courts of East Germany had been instructed accordingly. Shortly after this interview Fechner was replaced by Hilde Benjamin, known for her mercilessness in enforcing the will of the regime.

The divergence of approach thus ended with the defeat of Grotewohl. He clearly lacked the personal strength as well as the following to wage a head-on fight against Ulbricht. A German variety of Titoism has never developed, nor is it likely to develop. This is the case simply because a great war-time resistance movement such as that in Yugoslavia or Poland, on

* Grotewohl was until 1933 an SPD member of the Reichstag. He spent twelve years at the Dachau concentration camp. It is this seniority in suffering which, after 1945, gave him a prominent position in the re-established SPD in Berlin. Initially he was opposed to the SPD-CP merger which resulted in the formation of the SED, but capitulated later to the pressure of the Russians.

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which dissident leaders could have based themselves, did not and could not exist in Germany.

Ulbricht, then, proceded to whip his machine back into shape as though there had never been a June 17. But his difficulties had only begun then. For the uprising has lifted the opposition to a qualitatively new level of both consciousness and organization, so that one can no longer speak of the SED as a totalitarian party in the strict sense of the term.* The chief reason for this is that the SED can no longer effectively control the workers through its "transmission belt," the FDGB, partly because the FDGB has itself become a camouflage for concerted resistance. During the summer and early fall of 1953, the SED regime attempted to justify itself in open discussions at FDGB-sponsored shop meetings; but since its spokesmen were usually talked under the table by the workers, whose freedom from inhibitions never ceased to astound and appall the editors of *Neues Deutschland,* such meetings were discontinued. The workers implemented their frequent demands for "politically neutral" trade unions by means of what *Neues Deutschland* called "unprepared elections" which permitted the infiltration of "fascist underground agents." These were demands "which have no relationship to reality" (as the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* of July 21 put it), demands which some SED and FDGB functionaries supported (and probably had no choice but to support) and which were denounced as "nothing other than a continuation of the fighting tactics of the provocateurs and fascist agents of June 17." Inasmuch, continued the *Leipziger Volkszeitung,* as these demands were being officially sanctioned by the functionaries, and since "realities" did not permit their being met, they "only give the enemy the possibility to accumulate new fuel in order to set off the powder keg at the given moment." From these and many other similar statements, it is clear that the workers are continuing to create their own informal organizations and that at least the lower strata of functionaries in the SED and FDGB cannot be relied on by the Ulbricht regime.

On the other hand, however, there can be no doubt that Ulbricht has succeeded in tightening his party regime; there has been an unspectacular (because gradual) but persistent repression of the opposition in East Germany since the end of July, including the elimination of leaders. This factor must caution against any optimism regarding the level on which any future

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* "The superficial picture of violent suppression, of threats and persecutions, which is witnessed at present in the Soviet Zone of occupation of Germany, says nothing about the shift in the relationship of forces which has taken place since June 17 in all fields, politically as well as psychologically, and which still is taking place. The *Manchester Guardian* has emphasized an essential aspect of this process: '. . . the 17th of June has taught the world that the worker cannot easily be transformed into the stupid, tragic "proles" described by George Orwell in "1984".'" (*Monat,* op. cit., p. 66. The quotation from the *Manchester Guardian* is re-translated from the German.)

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uprising will take place. However, what constantly undermines the regime's efforts within the party organization is not only workers' resistance but the nationalism of the members of the re-organized apparatus. For nationalism in the countries under the Soviet heel is not merely a prevailing sentiment but a constant political reality, a part of life of all strata of the population, all the time.

IV

The reaction of the spokesmen of the West to the East German events was largely confined to laudatory words. President Eisenhower increased aid to West Berlin by fifty million dollars, a step which had been due in any case; and by the end of June, fifteen million dollars worth of food began to be distributed to the East Germans—a salutary step, perhaps, not entirely motivated by humanitarianism, but politically of small consequence. The attitude of the American representatives in Berlin was cautious, if not jittery; the radio reports of the uprising broadcast by RIAS (the State Department "Radio in the American Sector") were bitterly criticized as likely to provoke the Russians and endanger the security of Berlin. Russian-language broadcasts or leaflets informing the Soviet soldiers of the true nature of the uprising were not permitted by Western officials, despite the pleas of Russian emigre groups. Sympathy demonstrations of West Berlin workers were shunted to areas far away from the sector borders, thus nullifying the moral effect they might have had on the East Berlin population.* The immediate response of Chancellor Adenauer was a classical example of obtuseness: "What is happening behind the Iron Curtain strengthens us in our resolve to continue our present policy." That an extraordinary event was taking place in Eastern Germany, that the theory of the homogeneity and omnipotence of totalitarianism was being challenged by unarmed workers facing Russian bayonets, that a great opportunity had suddenly presented itself to do grave damage to Stalinism—this hardly seems to have penetrated the consciousness of either the West German politicians or the American officials. And the same was true of the labor movement in the West: where there should have been dramatic sympathy demonstrations there was only a limp indifference .

The Social Democratic Party of West Germany (SDP) did issue an appeal to the East Germans. Of the 91 words in this appeal, 14 were words of praise and the remaining 77 warned against excessive enthusi-

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* See Norbert Muhlen, "How the West Betrayed East German Revolt," in the *New Leader*, Sept. 7, 1953. Muhlen sees this "betrayal" on the part of the West as an avoidable mistake within the framework of a policy to which he gives staunch support. I consider it added evidence of the West's basic inability to combat Stalinism.

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asm.* Neither the SPD nor the trade unions thought in terms of those vast outpourings of the Berlin and West German workers which had occurred during the 1948 blockade and May Day celebrations.

That the uprising came suddenly, leaving no time for reflection, makes such reactions not less but more significant. They are characterized by a lack of historical sense, by perturbation, by an exaggerated fear of "what it all might lead to." In the face of the incredibly heroic action of the East German people, Adenauer is content to "reaffirm" his policy. The SPD "appeal" reflects a timidity concealed behind paternal admonitions to a people whose twenty years of experience with totalitarian regimes had surely given it the ability to appreciate just how far it could go in its opposition—and indeed, it is remarkable that nowhere in East Germany was there any effort to push the uprising into something more, into an adventure which would have given the Russians a pretext for rushing in their divisions.

The dilemma faced by the Social Democrats was this: they rejoiced in the action of the East German workers, but at the same time they could not help seeing that this action had, as one of its aspects, a profoundly nationalist character and could not therefore be blandly identified with the interests of the Western powers. Yet the Social Democrats, with whatever hesitation and criticism, had previously made clear their essential dependence on the Western powers.

The uprising was an intervention on the plane of international politics by people who had been its most tragic victims. Such "unforeseen" events always embarrass the smooth conduct of foreign policy; and the Social Democrats hesitated to add to the embarrassment of the Western powers which was already highly evident among their Berlin representatives. Moreover, the habitual conservatism of the SPD and the trade union leadership, always distrustful of mass actions and extra-legal activities, was too deeply ingrained to be shaken off in a few hours. Like the Warsaw uprising before it, the revolt of the East German workers met mainly indifference and almost universal incomprehension among those elements in the "free world" that might have been expected to respond with excitement and enthusiasm.

IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT, GIVEN A MORE RIGOROUS POLICY on the part of the Russians and the SED, the uprising could not have occurred and

* "Workers of East Berlin! Your battle and its achievements are beyond compare for a people under a dictatorship. Since the Soviet occupying power has intervened by declaring martial law, the realization of your political demand for free elections has become a problem whose solution no longer lies within the powers of a civilian population under military occupation. They can be attained only together with the forces of the free world. — Do not therefore let yourselves be carried away into action which can only lead to senseless sacrifice. Rather, save your strength for the coming struggles. — June 18, 1953." (In *News from Germany*, published by the Executive Committee of SPD, July 1953.)

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could not be repeated in the future. But the absence of those brutal retaliatory measures (such as wanton shooting, an extended period of martial law) which the Soviet troops were entirely in a position to take without in any way needing to fear U. S. intervention, indicates that the Russians were not—and are not—ready to settle upon the final status of the Eastern Zone. The prevention of German rearmament and the continuation of the military weakness of Western Europe—this remains the immediate major goal of the Russians. If they made or were to make an armed, terrorized camp out of East Germany, the reaction of the rest of Germany as well as France and England would certainly jeopardize their immediate major goal. The indecision with which the Russians and the SED dealt with their opponents in East Germany flows from the international situation. It thus not only made possible the uprising but continues to make possible a crystallization of the opposition which, with the experience of June 17 behind it, proceeds on a much higher level than before, although within the limitations imposed by the terror of the regime against the illegal cadres. No matter how well-organized, however, the opposition cannot fight the Russian army, though it can disintegrate the SED and demoralize its police formations. If the U. S. continues undeviatingly on the road to German rearmament and if it succeeds, Russia is likely to see more reason for a tougher suppression of the opposition in East Germany. With the two parts of Germany thus made into armed camps ruled by foreign powers, the likelihood of armed conflict would be greatly increased.

SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II and the expansion of Russian imperialism, most political attitudes implicitly assumed that, given the tightness of control and ubiquity of terror in the satellites as well as within the USSR itself, the struggle against Stalinism could originate only with the West. The events of June 17 proved this assumption to be false; the confidence in the West's ability to actively oppose Stalinism on the plane of social politics has proved to be unfounded by its shameful passivity in the face of the East German uprising.

Here was an uprising of earth-shaking impact of thousands of men and women who lacked all weapons save a belief in the feasibility of freedom and democracy despite the wars, concentration camps and dictatorship of the last twenty, thirty years; an uprising not only in the face of an armed oppressor but without the faintest hope of meaningful encouragement from the outside. This affirmation of hostility toward totalitarianism, this impassioned political *act* found no response in the West other than *words*—at best a few excited editorials, at worst paternal admonitions to be "cautious."

The uprising clearly showed that deep and powerful wellsprings of democracy exist in Germany upon which the West, if it meant its words,

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could base its policies. By abandoning its policies of "integration" and of German rearmament, by declaring itself unambiguously for German unity and free elections it might well have made possible an electoral victory for the SPD in September, thus further strengthening the movement towards a democratic, unified Germany. The success of such a policy could not have been guaranteed; but its probability was indicated by the impact of the June 17 uprising. Its effect—quite independent of its success—upon the satellites and possibly Russia itself, would have been inestimable.

Such a policy was inconceivable to the American government which thinks exclusively in terms of military measures, not in terms of a social policy by which to oppose Stalinism. The United States, hostile to political "experiments" and committed to sustaining reactionary governments throughout the world, could hardly view the East German events with enthusiasm. Claims that concerted resistance to Stalinism can come only from the Western powers have been effectively destroyed by the actions or lack of them, of the Western powers themselves. But what is equally important, the events of June 17 have also called into question the theoretical analysis upon which the defenders of the "only hope is in the West" school of politics have rested their case.

It is the contention of these writers, among whom Hannah Arendt is perhaps the most outstanding, that totalitarianism has effectively broken down the social structure of the countries under its domination and that totalitarian rulers build their power on the basis of a de-structured society, a society in which all previous groupings, especially class groups, have been obliterated, so as to leave only a powerless mass of atomized and socially isolated individuals. Totalitarianism is thus seen as essentially an alliance between a ruling terrorist elite and a "mass" or mob that has issued from the breakdown of the class-structured society of capitalism.

The key conclusion drawn from this argument is that totalitarian rule so effectively destroys previous structures, and especially class structures, that resistance to totalitarianism from within is no longer a realistic possibility. If no structured groupings exist, then no resistance of a collective character seems possible and hence all hope for mankind rests on the might of the non-totalitarian powers.

Whatever the relevance of this theory for Russia itself, it has not been borne out by the June 17 events. This theory cannot, for example, account for the fact that the June uprising was initiated and carried through not by mobs or "degrouped" masses but by well-structured groups of workers who took as their immediate point of departure the particular and concrete threats of the regime to their immediate economic existence. How can one account for the fact that from East Germany as well as from Czechoslovakia

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we hear again and again that whatever resistance there exists is based on demands of workers for the reduction of the work norms, higher pay, longer rest periods, etc.? How account for the fact that the key problems that concern the Stalinist rulers in these countries are low productivity, high rates of absenteeism, lack of enthusiasm for "socialist competition," etc. For these are *class* demands raised in the interests of a social class against a ruling state.

The test of a theoretical construct comes when it is confronted with the social reality it is supposed to clarify or predict. This test the theory of the "mass society," at least with regard to the satellite countries, has not met. We do not mean to imply that the special conditions of Eastern Germany, the fact that the East German regime was from its beginning imported rather than indigenous, need not be taken into account; it would be hazardous to apply conclusions regarding Germany to the totalitarian regime of Russia proper. But it has been the claim of the new analysts of totalitarianism that it is a society *sui generis,* that no matter when and where it is victorious it will lead to similar results. Failure to make discriminations as to time, place and social conditions—now boomerangs against the originators of this theory.

The East German regime has not succeeded in obliterating class distinctions, it has not so atomized individuals as to make them incapable of concerted action. The construction workers who began the uprising by marching in disciplined formations from their place of work to the seats of power, the steel workers who left their factories in ordered groups, cannot be conceived of without positing a deep sense of class solidarity, a high degree of organizing ability, and both traditions and motivations of a class nature. The events of Berlin occurred not because the workers dreamed of the four freedoms but because they wanted to lower the work norms. To the higher theoreticians of totalitarianism this may seem prosaic and uninspiring, but it is actually of immense political relevance to those concerned with the dynamics of totalitarian rule. The events of June 17 have furnished—or should have furnished—an object lesson to those people who have been blandly declaring that the working class was "finished," that it no longer had any resources of activity and rebellion.

The June 17 uprising was nationalist in nature: it articulated the legitimate demand for German freedom and unity, giving it the urgency that "realistic" politicians have denied it. The June 17 uprising was also a working class action in both social content and leadership. The democratic traditions of the German workers became part of the national heritage of Germany. Therein lies the historical significance of the day. Thus, it holds out the promise of a reconstituted and revitalized German society, which alone could guarantee the integrity of a united Europe. For this, however,

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a relatively favorable international situation must obtain; to create such a situation is indeed beyond the power of the German workers alone.

REPORT FROM THE U.N.

"Entering the temple, we beheld an amphitheatrical space, in the middle of which, a great fire was burning. Around it, were many chiefs, robed in long togas and presenting strange contrasts in their style of tattooing.

"Some were sociably laughing, and chatting; others diligently making excavations between their teeth with slivers of bamboo; or turning their heads into mills, were grinding up leaves and ejecting their juices. Some were busily inserting the down of a thistle into their ears. Several stood erect, intent upon maintaining striking attitudes; their javelins tragically crossed upon their chests. They would have looked very imposing, were it not, that in rear their vesture was sadly disordered. Others, with swelling fronts, seemed chiefly indebted to their dinners for their dignity. Many were nodding and napping. . . .

"But heedless of all, in the midst of the amphitheater, stood a tall, gaunt warrior, ferociously tattooed, with a beak like a buzzard; long dusty locks; and his hands full of headless arrows. He was laboring under violent paroxysms; three benevolent individuals essaying to hold him. But repeatedly breaking loose, he burst anew into his delirium; while with an absence of sympathy, distressing to behold, the rest of the assembly seemed wholly engrossed with themselves; nor did they appear to care how soon the unfortunate lunatic might demolish himself by his frantic proceedings. . . .

"What mob is this?" cried Media.

"'Tis the grand council of Vivenza," cried a bystander.

Mardi, chap. clvii—HERMAN MELVILLE

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LETTERS FROM PRISON

Rosa Luxemburg

The three letters that appear below are translated into English for the first time. They illustrate the two sides of Rosa Luxemburg: a tough and combative political fighter and a woman of fine sensibilities. Since it has long been the fashion among American radicals to sentimentalize the figure of Rosa and to think of her, largely because of their ignorance, as a "beautiful soul," the first of these letters may come as a shock, but a useful one. The violence of her political letter and the tenderness, at times skirting sentimentality, of the personal letter were elements of a unified personality. She was both a fighter and, to use her term, a "Mensch," a sensitive woman and a determined, even rigid, political polemist.

The Tilde of the first letter is Mathilde Wurm who, together with her husband Emanuel (Emmo), was an active member of the German Social Democratic Party. When the Social Democracy uncritically supported the Kaiser's regime during the First World War, the Wurms joined the Independent Social Democrats who split from the majority, urging a speedy peace, resumption of the class struggle and only critical support of the war. Luxemburg's position was, of course, strictly anti-war and the men she so violently attacks in this letter were all leaders of the Independents whose wavering position between the official Social Democracy and the small anti-war Spartakus Bund she found particularly distasteful.

The Haenschen of the second letter was a young intimate friend, Hans Diefenbach, a medical doctor, born in 1884 and killed at the front in October 1917.

The Martchen of the third letter is Marte Rosenbaum, a close personal and political friend of Rosa's. She played an important if inconspicuous part in the left socialist movement of Germany during the First World War. She died, obscurely, in Zurich in 1940.

These letters are taken, with permission, from a new collection edited by Benedict Kautsky (Rosa Luxemburg, *Briefe an Freunde,* Europaeische Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg, 1950.)

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ON BEING A 'MENSCH'

Wronke, 28/12/1916

My dear Tilde,

I am answering your Christmas letter immediately, while I still feel the wrath it caused me. Your letter made me terribly, wildly angry, because, for all its brevity, every line of it shows that you have again totally succumbed to the environment in which you move. This tearfully complaining tone, this self-pity and wailing over the 'disappointments' you have suffered—you say you have been disappointed in others, but why not look into the mirror, where you might discover the whole misery of mankind accurately portrayed. And when you speak of 'we' you mean your society of frogs croaking in their swamp; but during our old relationship, you meant *my* company. Naturally, I must identify you with the people you now associate with.

You complain in tones of melancholy that I find "too little aggressiveness" in your attitudes. "Too little," that's good! You don't march forward at all; you crawl. And the difference is one of kind, not degree. You and your kind belong altogether to a different zoological species than I, and never was your morose, peevish, cowardly and half-hearted kind more alien, more hateful, to me than it is now. You wouldn't mind more 'aggressiveness,' you say, only one gets pinched for it and that 'profits but little.' O, miserable shop-keeper's soul! You would be ready to offer even a bit of 'heroism' but only against cash; the profit must be on the counter immediately, be it only three moldy copper pennies. The simplest words of that honest and upright man, *Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, so help me God*—these were not spoken for you.

It is fortunate that the history of humanity was not made by people like you, or there would have been no Reformation and we would probably still be living under the *Ancien Regime*. But so far as I am concerned, while I have never been soft, I have recently become as hard as polished steel and from now on I will not make the slightest concession, either politically or in personal relations. I need only think of your gallery of heroes to be nauseated: the sweet Haase, Dittman with his beautiful beard and beautiful parliamentary speeches, Kautsky that vacillating shepherd, who is naturally followed through thick and thin by your Emmo, the wonderful Arthur—ah, *je n'en finirai!* I swear to you that rather than 'struggling' with your heroes or even to have anything to do with them I would sit for years, not here where I feel as if in paradise after what I had before, but in that hole on the Alexanderplatz where in a cell measuring eleven cubic meters, without light in the morning or evening, squeezed between the C (but without W) and the iron plank-bed I could read my Moerike aloud. I prefer Count Westarp—and not because he talked of my 'almond shaped

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velvet eyes' in the Reichstag, but because he, at least, is a *man.* I warn you that as soon as I will be free to taste fresh air again I will chase and hunt your company of frogs with trumpets, with cracking whips and blood hounds—I was going to say like Penthesilea, but God knows you are no Achilles.

Does this suffice as New Year's greetings? See to it that you remain a *Mensch.* To be a *Mensch,* that is the main thing. And that means to remain steadfast, clear, serene; yes, serene despite everything. To whimper is the business of weaklings. To be a *Mensch* means gladly to throw one's whole life, when need be, onto the 'great scale of destiny.' And it means, as well, to find pleasure in each clear day and each beautiful cloud. Oh, I don't know how to write recipes for being human, I only know how one *is;* and when we used to walk together in the fields of Suedende and the red evening sun lay on the wheat, you knew it too. Despite all its horror the world is beautiful, and if there were no weaklings and cowards it would be more beautiful still. But come: you get a kiss after all, for you are still an honest soul. Happy New Year!

R.

PRISON NIGHTS

Wronke 29/6/1917

Good Morning, Haenschen . . .

Every evening when I sit at my window with its iron bars, to breathe the fresh air and to dream, there begins somewhere in the neighborhood a persistent beating of rugs, or some sound like it. I have no idea who does this and where it is being done, but the regular recurrence of these sounds has led me to acquire an intimate, if indefinite, relation to them. They awaken in me some vague images of diligent homely work, of a small house in which everything is spotlessly clean and scrubbed—perhaps the home of one of our prison workers who only late in the day finds time to do her own work—some lonely old maid or widow, as most prison workers are, who uses her little bit of leisure to keep in meticulous order a few rooms which nobody enters and which she herself rarely uses. I really know nothing about it, but the few knocking sounds always convey to me a feeling of orderliness, quiet and at the same time a certain amount of anxiety caused by the narrowness and hopelessness of a life of poverty—cabinet with knicknacks, yellowed photographs, artificial flowers, an overstuffed couch. . . .

Have you also felt the impact of sounds whose origin is unknown to you? I have tested this in every prison. In Zwickau, for example, two ducks which lived somewhere in the neighborhood woke me every night at two with a loud 'Qua-qua-qua-qua.' The first of these four syllables were uttered

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in accents of the strongest conviction, and then they would decline to a deep murmuring bass. When awakened by this cry I always needed a few seconds to find my bearings and remember where I was, lying there in the total darkness and on a mattress hard as stone. The constant feeling of slight oppression that comes with a prison cell, the special accentuation of the 'qua-qua . . .' and the fact that I had no idea where the ducks were and heard them only during the night—all these gave their cry a secret and significant meaning. It always sounded to me as if they were uttering some wise saying which through nightly repetition acquired a sense of the irrevocable, something which had been valid since the beginning of the world, like a Coptic maxim:

> And on the heights of Indian airs,
> And in the depths of Egyptian tombs,
> I only heard the holy word. . . .

That I was unable to decipher the meaning of this duck-wisdom but only reached a vague presentiment of it, always caused me a curious anxiety, and I used to lie awake long into the night with a feeling of oppression.

In the Barnimstrasse Prison things were different. Willy-nilly, I had to go to bed at nine o'clock since the lights went out at that time, but naturally I couldn't sleep. Shortly after nine, in the dark stillness, there regularly began the crying of a two- or three-year old boy in one of the neighborhood apartment houses. It always started with a few low, broken-off whimpering sounds, fresh out of sleep; then, after some pauses, the little fellow would sob himself into a really pitiful weeping, which yet was not very energetic, did not express any definite pain or desire, only general discomfort with his existence, an inability to resolve the difficulties of life and its problems, especially since mama was clearly not at hand. This helpless crying continued for a full three-quarters of an hour. At exactly 10 in the evening I would hear the door energetically opened, light quick steps in the small room, and the sonorous youthful voice of a woman, still fresh from the outside air, saying: 'But why don't you sleep? Why don't you sleep?' Whereupon there followed three lively slaps, which made one feel the appetitizing roundness and warmth of the afflicted little part of the anatomy. And—O, wonder—the three slaps suddenly and easily solve all difficulties and all the complex problems of destiny. The whimpering ceases, the little boy quickly falls asleep and a redeeming quietness descends upon the court. This scene repeated itself so regularly each evening that it became part of my existence. By nine I would be waiting with tense nerves for my little unknown neighbor to wake up and begin whimpering, my little neighbor whose every register I knew and could hear beforehand, and through whom

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a sense of helplessness before life so fully communicated itself to me. I would wait for the return of the young woman, for her resounding question and above all for the peace-giving three slaps. Believe me, Haenschen, this old-fashioned means of solving problems via the behind of the little boy brought miracles to my soul, too: my nerves relaxed immediately, together with his, and I always fell asleep at about the same time he did. I have never found out from which geranium-adorned window, from which garret these sounds came to me. All the houses that I could see looked equally grey, sober and buttoned-up in the glaring light of the day, and they all seemed to say: 'We know nothing.' Only in the depth of the night, through the gentle breath of the summer air, were spun those mysterious relations between people who never knew or saw each other.

Oh, what beautiful memories I have of Alexanderplatz! Haenschen, do you know what Alexanderplatz is? My month and a half there left grey hair on my head and brought strains upon my nerves that I will never be able to relieve. And yet there is one small recollection of this place that rises like a flower in my memory. Night had already begun—it was the late fall, October, and there was no light in the cell—between five and six in the evening. The cell measuring eleven cubic meters, there remained nothing else for me to do than lie down on my plank-bed, squeezed between undescribable furniture, and to declaim my Moerike half aloud into the hellish music of the constantly passing elevated trains which made the cell quiver and threw red shadows over the clattering windowpanes. After ten o'clock the diabolic concert of the elevated would calm down a little and soon afterwards one would hear from the street the following little episode. First a gloomy male voice which seemed to call and admonish, then in reply the singing of an eight-year old girl, who evidently sang a children's song while jumping and hopping around and who at the same time would also break into silvery laughter, clear as a bell. It might have been a tired and surly janitor calling his daughter home to bed. But the little rogue didn't want to go, she made the bearded grumbler of a father catch her, flitting through the street like a butterfly and teasing the man, who only pretended to be severe, with a funny children's rhyme. One could almost see the fluttering of the short skirt and the thin legs flying in dance steps. In the hopping rhythm of her song, in her pearly laughter there was so much careless, victorious love of life, that the whole dark and dank building of the Central Police was enveloped as by a silvery coat of mist. The air in my evil-smelling cell seemed suddenly to exhale the fragrance of falling dark-red roses. . . . This is how one can everywhere find a little happiness in the streets and how one is always reminded that life is beautiful and rich.

Haenschen, you have no idea how blue the sky was today! Or was it equally blue in Lissa? I usually go out for half an hour in the evening,

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before the 'lock-up,' to water my little flowerbed with my own small can (I planted the pansies, forget-me-nots and phlox myself) and then to walk in the garden a little. This hour before nightfall has its own magic. The sun was still hot, but one likes to have its slanting rays burn one's neck and cheeks like a kiss. A gentle breeze fluttered the bushes like a whispered promise that the coolness of evening would soon come to replace the heat of day. On a sky of glittering trembling blueness there stood a few dazzlingly white clouds; a very pale half-moon swam between them in a ghostly way, as if in a dream. The swallows had already begun their usual flight, with their pointed wings cutting into shreds the blue silk of space, shooting hither and thither and turning over with shrill chirps in the dizzy heights. I stood there with my dripping watering can, my head turned upward, and I had a tremendous longing to dip into the wet glittering blueness up there, to bathe in it, to splash in it, to dissolve into foam and disappear. I thought of Moerike, you remember:

O river, my river in the ray of morning!
Receive now, receive
Once the longing body
And kiss breast and cheek!
The sky blue and pure as children,
Where the waves sing,
The sky in your soul,
O let me penetrate it!
I plunge with spirit and senses
Through the deepening blueness
And cannot attain it!
What is as deep, as deep as this?
Only love alone,
Which is never appeased and appeases never
With her changing light. . . .

R.

For God's sake, Haenschen, do not follow my bad example and become as talkative as me. It won't happen to me again, I promise!!!

THE SPRINGS OF HISTORY

Undated

My dear Martchen,

I was so happy after yesterday's visit. It was so beautiful, so cozy, and I hope it will be that way today and Sunday. For me it was a great psychic refreshment, and I will live on it for weeks. You, dear soul, have warmed me so well with your closeness. You will come back soon, won't you? I already look forward to your next visit. That is, if I shall still

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be here. But you need not be concerned about me: I now follow the doctor's orders closely and am confident I will leave here in good health and vigor, so that you will yet find pleasure in seeing me fight and work. And there will be much fighting and working. I absolutely do not despair. Dearest, when the situation looks most desperate, history itself always provides the best counsel. Saying this I do not mean to advocate a comfortable fatalism! On the contrary. The human will must be stimulated to the utmost, and it is our task to struggle consciously with all our might. What I mean is that the *success* of such conscious influence upon the masses depends now, when everything *looks* so utterly hopeless, on elementary and deeply hidden springs of history. I know from historical experience, as from my personal experience in Russia, that just at the point when everything seems without hope, a complete turn presents itself, a turn which is then all the more violent. Never forget that we are bound to historical laws of development, and that these laws *never* fail, though sometimes they don't follow the exact, detailed blueprints we have laid out. Therefore, keep your head high and do not lose courage. I hug you with all my love.

R.

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GOVERNMENT BY SECRECY

Lewis Coser

I. Whenever the powerless have confronted powerful decision makers, the quest for wider knowledge has been among their key demands. Since ignorance of the many is one of the bases upon which rests the power of the few, all democratic movements felt publicity to be intrinsically desirable. Shared knowledge is the precondition of shared action. Without knowledge men are automatically excluded from decision making.

As long as politics were conducted by an elite for an elite, knowledge of the facts and the grounds for action necessarily remained restricted to that elite. As long as sacred knowledge was the property of an elite of priests, members of the religious community remained bound to traditional observance. The demand for the translation of the Bible into the vernacular was linked with the desire of the Reformers to widen the area of religious choice. Similarly, the rising middle class of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries asked for more information and publicity on affairs of state, that is for an end to the upper class monopoly of knowledge, in order to break the traditional political structure and to open the way for political innovation. Restriction of access to new ideas and new facts helped to stabilize the *status quo*. Newspapers rose in this period to supply the need for widening the circle of those 'in the know.'

II. Locke still felt that "Knowledge and science in general are the business of those who are at ease and leisure," yet a century later middle class thought, especially in America, was committed to the idea that ignorant people cannot maintain their freedom; to quote Jefferson's formulation. "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free . . . it expects what never was and never will be."

During the nineteenth century this basic liberal tenet exerted powerful checks on the propensity of powerholders to maintain an aura of ignorance about their decisions. Until the end of the preceding century press communication about British parliamentary discussions had been a criminal

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offense; but the last vestiges of such attempts to limit access to political knowledge disappeared in the successive parliamentary reforms of the nineteenth century.

Classical liberal thought made full access of all to facts and ideas the cornerstone of the good society. If men can only choose freely on the market place of ideas, John Stuart Mill felt, they will in the long run be able to choose the right ones. Only ignorance and error prevented fully rational action; the reduction of ignorance hence facilitated in itself the probability of rational choice. Open debate, with all the facts of the case openly revealed, was the ideal method for settling both political and intellectual controversy. Parliament was conceived essentially as a kind of market place for the exchange of ideas and information.

Ideologies express but also obscure underlying social realities. Liberal ideology often served to veil the facts of illiberal politics, and capitalist society never fully embodied the liberal ideal. Thus, in the realm of diplomacy, especially, Wilson's open-covenants-openly-arrived-at still seemed in 1918 a revolutionary departure from current practice. Yet the ideals of publicity and the continued extension of knowledge permeated the last century and exerted restraining pressure upon the powerholders. Actions which were not in tune with the professed canons of political faith were, at least sometimes, engaged in with a bad conscience.

Every bureaucracy, as Max Weber has observed, seeks to increase the superiority of the professionally informed by keeping their knowledge and intentions secret; bureaucratic administration always tends to surround itself with a cloak of 'official secrecy' to hide its knowledge and action from criticism. Yet, these tendencies were checked during the last century because of both the general suspicion of bureaucratic action and the strength of democratic ideology.

III. The rise of the bureaucratic state is accompanied in the twentieth century by the rise of mass propaganda. As liberalism is predicated on the idea of enlightenment so bureaucratic power is predicated on indoctrination. Wherever the interests of the bureaucratic power holders are at stake, they attempt to shore up their power by increasing the secrecy of decision-making and manipulating the underlying population. For the bureaucracy, as Marx knew already, the people are only a thing to be manipulated. But manipulation can succeed only if the real decisions are shrouded behind a veil of secrecy. Bureaucracy strives for a poorly informed yet cheerfully acquiescent mass of fascinated followers. Hence propaganda and official secrecy go hand in hand. Censorship is simply negative propaganda.

Secrecy insures power, it allows quick decisions of small groups of men

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'in the know' and inhibits counteraction by the many who are not in the know; hence the decisive action of which bureaucratic régimes are sometimes capable. Witness the recent Beria purge.

Given a monopoly on knowledge, powerholders can exert dominion over all those who are incapable of acting rationally because they do not know the real situation. The garrison state may be defined as a type of dominion in which the means to acquire knowledge are denied to all but the general staff.

IV. WITHOUT INFORMATION THERE CAN BE NO RATIONAL ACTION. To cite an illustration from Norbert Wiener: Driving a car is possible only if the driver continually receives new information about the condition of the road, other vehicles, his nearness to the curb, etc. He perpetually adjusts his steering wheel to the new information he absorbs. Hence no driving would be possible if new knowledge were not continuously made available to the driver. Rational action is informed action. Where information is available rational choices can be made.

The seriousness of certain types of illness, cancer for example, stems from the fact that information about the condition is usually acquired only at a stage where counteraction is difficult or impossible. If appropriate cues and signals were available early, cancer might be arrested or cured without too much difficulty.

V. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, as we have seen, is the century of propaganda. Propaganda does not rest on rational persuasion but rather utilizes non-rational appeals in order to restrict conscious choice. Far from presenting all the issues and facts to inspections propaganda limits 'choice' to one pre-chosen theme. The propagandist attempts, literally, to make up the victim's mind.

Until recently American political propaganda still operated under the handicap of the generally unfavorable connotation of the term. Hence governmental propaganda agencies called themselves by names which indicated what they were *not*: Committee on Public *Information,* Office of *Facts* and Figures, Office of War *Information.* In reality these agencies did not inform primarily, but rather inculcated a line by hiding harmful truths or propagating 'useful lies'; they sinned both by commission and by omission. As counter-pressure against their activities has decreased in recent years, the propagandists have become less bashful. Psychological warfare has become a currently acceptable term, and respectable universities teach courses in the arts of mass manipulation. The drift from rational persuasion to irrational indoctrination thus runs parallel with the drift from open debate to secret decision-making.

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VI. In a public world dominated by the stereotypes of propaganda and in which access to the facts is 'restricted,' the citizen is no longer able to test adequately the reality in which he finds himself. Cut off from the means of such reality testing, it becomes increasingly difficult for him to make up his mind independently.

In a regime of total secrecy and total propaganda the underlying population is deprived of relevant information and hence stripped of the means which make rational choice possible. How is one to react toward war if, as in Orwell's *1984,* one doesn't even know for sure whether a war is going on or not? How is one to judge American foreign policy if one doesn't even know approximately the extent of American military involvement in such countries as Yugoslavia, Turkey or North Africa? Reports from Russia have indicated that people in cities were often not even aware that famine stalked the countryside and thus could not make any rational choices as to questions involving economic policies.

Lack of knowledge fosters irresponsibility. Bureaucratic masters thus confront an anxious and fearful mass of men who do not dare to act because they "don't know the facts," "can do nothing about this," are "only little men who follow orders."

Anxious, fearful and ignorant men turn to leaders and experts who "know the facts" and thus "can be trusted." In this manner secret knowledge generates further power. Ignorance and fear leads to further restrictions on the possibilities of testing reality, further dependence on the experts, greater inability to act rationally. Once the reality testing process is crippled, as Harold Lasswell has pointed out, the frames of information are broken. Under such conditions increasing uncertainty created by lack of information fosters the growth of suspiciousness, and hence irrational outbreaks of hostility and aggression against "frightening" objects: Jews, Foreigners, Communists. Thus suspicious ignorance breeds irrational action.

When Freud, that great rationalist, formulated as the aim of analysis that "Where Id was there should Ego be," he implied the need for an extension of the reality principle as against the pleasure principle, a strengthening of the reality-oriented Ego against the onrushing instinctual forces embodied in the Id. Dominance of the reality principle was to be achieved through the extension of the ability to test and check reality and to act accordingly. But a reality which is unknown and unknowable cannot be tested. One cannot adjust rationally to a situation which is unknown. Hence anxiety and childlike trust in leaders and experts becomes a psychic need for those who are denied the prerequisites of independent thinking.

VII. Critics may say that enlightenment is not enough, that rationality does not guarantee the good society. This is true. It remains

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that the tradition of the enlightenment is infinitely more precious to those who want to change the world they live in than a tradition which stresses meekness, acquiescence and assent to the dark forces of unreason.

We do not know whether knowledge about the secret horrors of the Nazi or Russian concentration camps on the part of the German and Russian masses would have made a difference in their behavior. We do know, however, that the rulers of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia thought that it would—else they wouldn't have kept them secret. Knowledge about these horrors *might* have caused disaffection and revulsion; ignorance made such reaction entirely impossible.

The sickness of modern society, others will object, stems not from the lack of knowledge but rather from the decay of moral commitment, the lack of indignation concerning facts which *are* known. This also is admitted. Yet the quest for knowledge is in itself of profoundly moral significance and, above all, commitments without knowledge are always the distinctive mark of reactionary thought. Insofar as radicals have asked for that type of commitment they have abandoned that critical function which has been the distinguishing mark of truly radical thought.

VIII. Secrecy of decision-making has not been absent from any class society, but it is an essential prerequisite for totalitarian rule, which must necessarily rest upon the elimination of all genuine publicity about the actions of the ruling elite. Hence an increase in the secrecy of governmental action may be taken as an index of the drift toward the garrison state in America. Only a few cases will be mentioned, without much comment. They are only meant to indicate that we begin to face a public world in which many elements, though they may decisively influence our personal and political destinies, are removed from our scrutiny.

• Public Law 283 of the 80th Congress created a Central Intelligence Agency. The CIA is completely free from public control. No one knows the number or names of its employees or the precise activities which it performs. It does not report to Congress nor is its budget submitted to the usual congressional controls.

It was recently revealed that this agency has been involved in subsidizing, to the amount of $150,000 annually, a League of German Youth with a "Technical Service" consisting of 2,000 ex-Nazi officers. The Premier of the German state of Hesse revealed that this CIA-financed organization had, among other things, drawn up a list of German public figures to be liquidated as politically unreliable. The list contained the names of 80 leading Socialists and trade unionists of Western Germany. The CIA seems also to have been involved in the arming of the remnants of Chiang's troops in Burma, that is in the training and supplying of troops which wage guer-

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rilla warfare against the Socialist government of Burma. Recent reports from Tokyo revealed that CIA agents had kidnaped a Japanese writer whom they considered pro-Communist; there have also been reports about the CIA agents attempting to tap the telephone of Costa Rica's leftist President. These are only isolated incidents; the bulk of the CIA's work remains hidden. This agency is thus engaged in activities which might conceivably lead to war, yet its acts are secret, hence uncontrollable. (For further details see the well-documented article on the CIA by Bob Repas in *The Progressive* for September 1953.)

• One of the four Commissioners of the Atomic Energy Commission, Eugene Zuckert, with typical bureaucratic ineptness and disdain, said recently in a broadcast: "From the standpoint of national security we are giving the American people all the information they really need." This can only mean that the American people need not be given any information on atomic matters, since hardly any has been forthcoming. Many atomic scientists actually involved in research and with some knowledge of its impact and implications have passionately pleaded for greater candor in informing the public about atomic developments. See, for example, the article by Robert Oppenheimer, in the July, 1953 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. But when the world heard that Russia had the Hydrogen bomb, President Eisenhower had a hurried breakfast with his atomic chief, Lewis Strauss—this is the man who some time ago refused to ship radioactive isotopes to a Norwegian military hospital because he was afraid of the security implications of such a humanitarian act—and his chief of propaganda, C. D. Jackson, and issued a two-paragraph statement about a "thermonuclear experiment." After which the President returned to his vacation. . . .

During the days when these notes are being written we have had the following statements on atomic developments by supposedly responsible government spokesmen:

Sunday: Arthur S. Fleming, head of the Office of Defense Mobilization: "Soviet Russia is capable of delivering the most destructive weapon devised by men on chosen targets in the United States."

Monday: Charles E. Wilson, Secretary of Defense: "It will be perhaps three years before [the Russians] have a reasonable number of bombs and airplanes that could deliver them."

Sunday: Representative Sterling Cole, Chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, called for an additional expenditure of $10,000,000,000 a year for defense of this continent against atomic bombs because: "I think the condition is that desperate."

Monday: Secretary Wilson stated that all he could do was to add $500,000,000 for defense purposes and there was no need for alarm.

The government claims that withholding information about atomic

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developments is dictated by military security; many prominent scientists have said that this is not the case; for the outsider it has become impossible to discern to what degree information is withheld for military or for political reasons.

• The Federal Bureau of Investigation has knowledge about all of us, but we have little or no knowledge about it. This secret knowledge gives it secret power. Among the many instances in which this power has been clearly shown we mention only the many cases in which agents of the Bureau have intimidated and cowed young people from participating in 'unpopular causes' by threatening to reveal these activities to school authorities or to employees, or by stating that such activities would close chances for careers in public services. The use of the Bureau's files in various 'loyalty' investigations is too well known to need elaboration here.

• Commenting upon the recent military treaty with Franco, the conservative Hanson Baldwin writes in the *New York Times* for September 29: "The terms of the accord gave no real clue to its exact meaning; indeed, there have probably been few accords among nations in history that have been couched in so many generalities and qualified with so many restrictions, limitations and ambiguities. The commitments the United States has assumed in return for the right to use unspecified bases are nowhere clearly spelled out in the published documents, and the obligations of both countries in case of actual war apparently are mentioned only in secret codicils. Thus, the basic agreement commits the United States to courses of politico-military action unknown to the American people at an unestimated cost in men, military equipment and dollars without the ratification of the Senate."

• Some months ago the papers reported that a member of a secret atomic research team had fallen dangerously ill and that in order to prevent his disclosing any kind of information, he had been kept incommunicado and under military guard in an isolated sickroom for a long period of time—lest he mention any information in his delirium. The man was thus kept from normal human contact in his condition of need for reasons of state. One need not have too vivid an imagination if one fears that that what was done yesterday to this sick man, may be done tomorrow to a healthy one. And indeed, certain among the returning American POW's, who gave evidence of having absorbed some Stalinist ideas during their stay in North Korean camps, have apparently been kept isolated in military hospitals. Their heterodox beliefs were equated with mental illness by military spokesmen though what seemed really to be involved was not so much their health as the health of the state.

• While general accessibility of research findings until recently has been one of the central tenets of the ethos of science, it is now a fact that

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a high proportion of research in the natural sciences, and some research findings in the social sciences, are no longer available to the scientific community but are 'restricted' for the exclusive use of the bureaucratic masters of these researchers. Secrecy in this field spells serious danger to scientific progress and many scientists have pointed out that it may actually lead to the stagnation of serious research.

IX. IGNORANCE, AS MOORE AND TUMIN HAVE SHOWN ("Some Social Functions of Ignorance," *American Sociological Review,* December, 1949) serves positive functions for the powerholders in as far as it enables them to remove the grounds of their decisions from debate.

Knowledge and social power are closely linked. Not that those who have knowledge necessarily acquire power; but those who are devoid of knowledge are necessarily powerless. Hence radicals have an interest in the widest access to information. This is why the struggle against secrecy has now become one of the most crucial *political* tasks. If we lose the possibility of acquiring full knowledge about the world we live in, all our thinking and acting can be but groping in the dark. If the present trend continues, we will be approaching a condition in which the monopoly on rationality of some will be secured through the enforced irrationality, and hence powerlessness, of the many.

For all of us, but especially for those who are professional intellectuals, the extension of knowledge about the public world we live in has in itself become a radical task, which cannot be accomplished without reversing in drastic ways the drift toward the garrison state. It is a measure of the decay of liberal politics that the simple demand for information has become these days a revolutionary demand.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF GEORGE ORWELL

George Woodcock

Imagine Don Quixote without his horse and his drooping whiskers, and you will get a fair idea of what George Orwell looked like. He was a tall and angular man, with a worn Gothic face that was elongated by vertical furrows at the corners of the mouth. His rather narrow upper lip was adorned by a thin line of moustache, and the general gauntness of his looks was accentuated by the deep sockets from which his eyes looked out sadly.

I first met Orwell during the early years of the last war, when he was working at the Indian Department of the B.B.C. in London. He had sent me an invitation to take part in a discussion panel on poetry which he was organizing, and, since we had recently indulged in a rather violent dispute in the *Partisan Review,* I was a little surprised at such an approach. But I agreed, mostly, I think, to show that I bore as few ill feelings as Orwell himself evidently did.

A few days later I went along to the improvized wartime studio in a former Oxford Street bargain basement. Orwell was there, as well as Mulk Raj Anand, Herbert Read and William Empson, whom I already knew, and Edmund Blunden, whom I had not met before. The program turned out to be a made-up discussion which Orwell had prepared skilfully beforehand and which the rest of the participants were given a chance to amend before it went on the air. All of us objected to small points, as a matter of principle, but the only major change occurred when Orwell himself produced a volume of Byron and, smiling around at the rest of us, suggested that we should read "The Isles of Greece." At that time the British government was officially opposed to the Indian independence movement (Gandhi was still in prison), and as the ringing verses of revolt were read the program assumed a mild flavor of defiance which we all enjoyed. Orwell, I noticed, had a very rough-and-ready idea of radio production, and his own level voice was not effective for broadcasting. Afterwards we

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went to a tavern in Great Portland Street frequented by broadcasting men, where Orwell discoursed cynically on the futility of the trouble we had taken over a program to which he doubted if more than two hundred Anglophile Indians would bother to listen. He was already feeling the frustration of a job that was mostly concentrated on the dissemination of official propaganda. By the next time I saw him, during 1943, he had resigned from the BBC and become the literary editor of the *Tribune,* a socialist review which upheld the Bevanite wing of the Labor Party and at that time was sharply critical of the Churchill government.

On this occasion I encountered Orwell on the top of a bus at Hampstead Heath. He immediately began to talk about the journalistic disagreements which had preceded our actual meeting. "There's no reason to let that kind of argument on paper breed personal ill feeling," he said. This disarming remark was typical of Orwell's attitude towards opponents with whom he found some common ground of liberal humanity or intellectual scrupulousness. He was ready to fight out debatable ideas in a bold and slashing manner that was reminiscent of the nineteenth century polemicists, but this did not prevent him from remaining on the friendliest personal terms with his opponents, provided they were willing, which was not always the case. The only exception he seemed to make was towards the totalitarians. His battle with them was whole-hearted, and I remember his indignation when he once told me about a Communist poet who had published a bitter personal attack on him and later tried to be affable when they met in a public house. To Orwell this seemed the grossest hypocrisy, because he knew that the Stalinists detested him as one of their most dangerous enemies.

Not long after my second meeting with Orwell, he told me that he had just written a political fairy tale, for which he was then trying vainly to find a publisher. I was connected with a small press, and he wondered whether we might consider it. I mentioned the book to my associates, but none of them was particularly interested, and the suggestion was allowed to lapse. This was unfortunate, for the fairy tale was *Animal Farm;* Orwell's difficulty in placing it was due more than anything else to the widespread feeling at the time that it was undiplomatic and even a little unpatriotic to say very much in criticism of Communist Russia. One publisher, who has since become prominent in his anti-Communism, put about a report that the book was "extreme" and "hysterical," and it was only after much peddling and after he had thought of private publication, that Orwell eventually persuaded Secker and Warburg to bring out *Animal Farm.* He and his publishers were equally surprised when it turned out to be an international best seller.

I began to see more of Orwell while he was working at the *Tribune,*

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where, despite the paper's rather narrow political dogmatism, he opened its literary pages to writers of all the left-of-center viewpoints. But his generosity too often submerged his discernment for him to be a really effective editor, and usually the most interesting page of the *Tribune* was his own weekly piece, "As I Please," in which he discoursed on any facet of life or letters that happened to strike his fancy. It was the best short essay writing of the Forties. Orwell's versatility was astounding; he could always find a subject on which there was something fresh to say in a prose that, for all its ease and apparent casualness, was penetrating and direct.

II

My acquaintance with Orwell developed into friendship in the latter part of 1944, mainly through a common concern for civil liberties. As always happens in time of war, the more intransigeant minorities of opinion were sometimes rather harshly treated, and their members imprisoned or otherwise discriminated against. There was a great deal of discussion on this point among the English intellectals. Some claimed that freedom of criticism and protest should be temporarily relinquished in safeguarding what they regarded as greater freedoms. Others, including Orwell and most of his friends, held with varying degrees of emphasis that the liberties of speech and writing could only be abandoned with danger to the general climate of intellectual life.

The issue was given added importance through the attitude of the National Council for Civil Liberties, which had become largely infiltrated by Communists and fellow travellers and was almost completely inactive in protecting non-Communists. The matter came to a head when three editors of a minority paper were sent to gaol for publishing anti-war views. A committee which had been formed to defend them was perpetuated to deal with other similar issues, and, under the name of the Freedom Defence Committee, led a precarious but active existence from 1944 until 1949. Its leading members were a mixed group of intellectuals, artists and political workers drawn from every group between the liberals and the anarchists; only conservatives and communists were absent. Bertrand Russell, H. J. Laski, E. M. Forster, Herbert Read, Cyril Connolly, Benjamin Britten, Henry Moore, Osbert Sitwell and Augustus John were among its supporters, and Orwell became vice-chairman. I recollect that when I transmitted the Committee's invitation to him he was at first hesitant about accepting. " I don't want to get back on the treadmill of administrative work," he said. When I assured him that no great demands would be made on his time, he agreed, and became, while his health allowed, much more helpful, both materially and morally, than his initial hesitation had led us to suppose. He wrote, advised and gave freely, occasionally he would buttonhole some influ-

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ential person we wished to interest, and on rare occasions he could be persuaded to speak in public. A throat wound during the Spanish Civil War had robbed his voice of resonance, but he spoke with such unpretentious conviction that I never remember an audience treating him other than with attention and respect. It was through our constant contact with Orwell over such matters that my wife and I became friendly with him, and our business conversations developed into more informal and personal meetings.

III

What made Orwell such an excellent journalist and also gave his novels a reality that was much more than mere verisimilitude was his intense interest in the concrete aspects of living, in "the surface of life," as he would say, and also the way in which his writing seemed to extend and amplify his daily life and conversation. Now, when I re-read his books, I am perpetually reminded of the talk on evenings we spent together, at our respective homes, or sometimes dining in Soho and going on to the Café Royal or some literary public house.

Orwell's own flat, where he lived with a small adopted son to whom he was extravagantly devoted, was in Islington, perched high up under the roof of a tall Georgian house in a square on the edge of a working class district. It was a dark and almost dingy place, with a curious Englishness of atmosphere. There was a great screen plastered with cut-outs from magazines in the living room, on the walls hung Victorian portraits murky with bituminous shadow, and a collection of china mugs, celebrating various popular nineteenth century festivals, crowded on top of the crammed bookshelves. By the fireplace stood a high-backed wicker arm-chair, of an angularly austere shape I have seen nowhere else, and here Orwell himself would sit. His study looked like a workshop; he was very fond of manual work, and when he was in London would often do some joinery as a relaxation from writing.

I do not think Orwell was entirely indifferent to comfort, but he certainly set no great store by appearances, and his times of hardship had given him an easy contempt for the trappings of the bourgeois life. His way of dressing even when he was earning well, remained that of the poorer English intellectuals, and I never saw him clad otherwise than in baggy, grubby corduroys, a worn tweed jacket with leather patches on the elbows, and shoes which were never very well polished. John Morris, who disliked Orwell, wrote in *Penguin New Writing* an essay which suggested that this sartorial carelessness was an aspect of a childish and self-conscious rebellion against the standards of polite behavior. It always seemed to me that, having once escaped from middle class manners, Orwell just did not find them

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worth the trouble of resuming. Certainly he practised no self-conscious Spartanism, and on the few occasions when we visited fairly expensive restaurants together, I noticed that he enjoyed the food as well as anybody else. He seemed to have naturally modest physical needs, though he never rejected good when it came his way.

Whenever one arrived at Orwell's flat, or when he came wheezing up the stairs to one's own, there was at first a period of relative silence, for Orwell, though a gregarious, was also a reserved man. Then, after a while, the conversation would start, over a meal, or sitting before a coal or peat fire, with Orwell rolling cigarettes of the strongest black shag he could find and drinking tea almost as thick as treacle. Sometimes the talk would develop into a monologue on his part. He had lived a very varied life, had been a policeman in Burma, a dishwasher in Paris, a bum and a grocer in England, had fought in Spain against Franco and lived for a while in Morocco. And he would tell of his experiences in such an entertaining way that one rarely had the least desire to interrupt him. His voice was rather flat, with the slight vestige of an Eton accent, but it had a monotonous kind of fascination and seemed to throw into relief the vividness of his descriptions. At other times we would converse on the strangest variety of subjects, and, however banal our text, Orwell would usually discuss it with such humor and thoroughness that he managed to lift it right out of its pristine dullness. For instance, we would talk about tea, and ways of making it, or about comic postcards, and he would bring in such a wealth of illustration and reminiscence and odd tags of information that one was stimulated to enter into the subject with as much zest as he. And then, a week or two later, one would find that this conversation had become a part of his writing, and formed the basis of a leisurely, fascinating essay in some newspaper or magazine.

At yet other times, the conversation would range over deeper matters, and Orwell would expound his fears of the future of society, and dilate on the way in which the concern for freedom and truth had grown weak in popular consciousness, as well as in literature and politics. In this way he told us all the basic ideas of his masterpiece, *Nineteen Eighty Four,* though, with a characteristic modesty, he talked little of the book itself, and until I saw it finally in print, I had only the slightest idea of the plot. When he talked on such theses he could paint a really horrifying picture of the fate that might befall us. After such a session Herbert Read, who himself is not exactly a light-hearted man, once said to me: "My God, Orwell is a gloomy bird!" And often, indeed, it did seem as though one had been listening to the voice of Jeremiah.

Apart from his accent, the only characteristic of the public school background that Orwell seemed to have retained was his emotional stoicism of

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behavior. Even his anger was demonstrative only on paper, and, while his generosity and consideration for other people indicated the presence of deep feelings, he showed them rarely. He was certainly interested in women, but he never displayed the fact, and one unusually beautiful girl remarked to me that Orwell was the only one among her male acquaintances who never made her feel that he was aware of her as a woman.

IV

During 1946 Orwell bought a house on the Isle of Jura in the Hebrides, to which he would retire for months on end. From this time onward we saw little of him, but letters frequently arrived in which he gave vivid pictures of his life there and kept us posted on his activities. In August, 1946, for instance, he told me that he had just started a new novel, which he hoped to finish during the following year. It became *Nineteen Eighty Four* and was destined to be his final book. A month later he sent a lengthy description of life on the island; the following passage shows the intense interest he always took in the concrete aspects of the life that went on around him and also in its social undertones.

"We have been helping the crofter who is our only neighbor with his hay and corn, at least when rain hasn't made it impossible to work. Everything is done here in an incredibly primitive way. Even when the field is ploughed with a tractor the seed is still sown broadcast, then scythed and bound up into sheaves by hand. They seem to broadcast corn, i.e., oats, all over Scotland, and I must say they seem to get it almost as even as can be done by a machine. Owing to the wet they don't get the hay in till about the end of September, or even later, sometimes as late as November, and they can't leave it in the open but have to store it all in lofts. A lot of the corn doesn't quite ripen and is fed to the cattle in sheaves like hay. The crofters have to work very hard, but in many ways they are better off and more independent than a town laborer, and they would be quite comfortable if they could get a bit of help in the way of machinery, electrical power and roads, and could get the landlords off their backs and get rid of the deer. These animals are so common on this particular island that they are an absolute curse. They eat up the pastures where there ought to be sheep, and they make fencing immensely more expensive than it need be. The crofters aren't allowed to shoot them, and are constantly having to waste their time dragging carcases of deer down from the hills during the stalking season. Everything is sacrificed to the brutes because they are an easy source of meat and therefore profitable to the people who own them. I suppose sooner or later these islands will be taken in hand, and then they could either be turned into a first-rate area for dairy produce and meat, or else they would support a large population of small peasants living off cattle

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and fishing. In the 18th century the population here was 10,000—now less than 300."

Towards the end of 1946 the only large independent left-wing bookstore in London was bought out by the Communists. Orwell was appalled when I wrote him the news and immediately replied with a scheme for setting up a rival concern to maintain an outlet for individual publications. In a period of poverty, he had worked as salesman in a Hampstead bookshop, and now he was full of ideas as to how a new store might be run efficiently and independently. Nothing came of the project, and I think the letter he wrote on this occasion was intrinsically more interesting for some comments on his own works which illustrate the rigorously self-critical standards he set himself. I was then studying his books, and I had asked whether he could lend me a copy of a relatively little known novel he had written in the 1930's, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. "I haven't a copy of 'Keep the Aspidistra Flying,'" he answered. "I picked up a copy in a secondhand shop some months back, but I gave it away. There are two or three books which I am ashamed of and have not allowed to be reprinted or translated, and that is one of them. There is an even worse one called 'A Clergyman's Daughter.' This was written simply as an exercise, and I oughtn't to have published it, but I was desperate for money, ditto when I wrote 'Keep the A.' At that time I simply hadn't a book in me, but I was half starved and had to turn out something to bring in £100 or so."

Actually, both books would have satisfied any ordinary journeyman writer, and Orwell's remarks show the seriousness with which he took his literary craftsmanship. His writing seemed effortless, but it was only so because of the exacting discipline he imposed on structure and verbal texture alike.

Orwell spent the winter of 1946-7 in London, but in the following spring he left once more for the Hebrides, and we never saw him again. Letters followed each other during the summer. Looking through them, I find Orwell approving my own intention to write a book on Wilde. "I've always been very pro-Wilde," he commented. I particularly like 'Dorian Gray,' absurd as it is in a way." I suspect that Orwell's liking for Wilde was based mostly on his natural sympathy for the defeated, since there is certainly little in common between the close discipline of his own work and the lushness of Wilde's, except perhaps a shared liking for surface color.

During these months, Orwell was working with difficulty on *Nineteen Eighty Four*, which he did not expect to finish before the following spring. "It always takes me a hell of a time to write a book even if I am doing nothing else, and I can't help doing an occasional article, usually for some American magazine, because one must earn some money occasionally."

It was at this time that Orwell took a decision which many of his friends

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regarded with disquiet. He announced that, apart from a trip to London in November, he intended to stay in the Hebrides over the winter. With his precarious health and his previous attacks of tuberculosis, it seemed rash indeed for him to remain in the damp fall and winter climate of the Isles, but he was the kind of man with whom, one knew beforehand, it would be useless to argue once he had made up his mind. Moreover, he seemed already to have thought of plenty of reasons for staying, and he detailed them to me in a letter which made me feel his real motive was that infatuation with the semi-idyllic life of remote and fairly primitive communities which at times seizes demandingly on city-tired intellectuals. . . .

In any event, Orwell did not get away from Scotland at all that winter. His health had been poor all summer, and in October it was probably made worse by a fishing accident in which his boat capsized and he and his small son were almost drowned. A little while after this it became evident that he was seriously ill with tuberculosis in the left lung. He was bedridden at home for two months, and when he next wrote me in January, 1948, it was from a hospital in Lanarkshire to which he had been removed a fortnight previously. "I have felt a bit less like death since being here," he remarked stoically, and he was hopeful of being about again by the summer and of getting a correspondent's job in a warm climate during the winter.

Sickness did not diminish Orwell's interest in what went on around him, he was still much concerned about civil liberties. A purge of Communists in the British civil service began early in 1948, and, in spite of his hostility to Communism, Orwell thought that the methods of the government, which did not allow suspects to confront their accusers, formed a dangerous precedent. I think his words speak for themselves on this important issue.

"It is not easy to have a clear position," he said, "because, if one admits the right of governments to govern, one must admit their right to choose suitable agents, and I think any organization, e.g., a political party, has a right to protect itself against infiltration. But at the same time, the *way* in which the government seems to be going to work is vaguely disquieting, and the whole phenomenon seems to me part of the general breakdown of the democratic outlook. Only a week or two ago the Communists were shouting for unconstitutional methods to be used against the Fascists, now the same methods are to be used against themselves, and in another year or two a pro-Communist government might be using them against us. Meanwhile the general apathy about freedom of speech, etc., constantly grows, and that matters more than what may be on the statute books."

During the spring and early summer of 1948 Orwell seemed to be recovering, and in July he told us that he was going back to Jura. "They seem to think I am pretty well cured and will end up perfectly O.K. so long as I

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don't relapse during the next few months." As soon as he returned to the Isles he resumed work on *Nineteen Eighty Four*. By September his condition had begun to worsen, but, though he was in what he called "a ghastly state," he did not leave the island for treatment until December; he insisted on finishing his novel beforehand. "The effort of doing so didn't make me any better," he said. He certainly seemed moved by an obstinate sense of compulsion, and I have since felt that he knew he was unlikely to recover and wished to present in a complete form the book that was to be his testament.

I heard from him for the last time early in 1949. He had now gone to a sanatorium in Gloucestershire. He seemed contented there, and something of the grim old Orwellian humor came back when he discussed his treatment. "They are giving me something called P.A.S. which I suspect of being a high-sounding name for aspirins, but they say it is the latest thing and gives good results. If necessary I can have another go of streptomycin, which certainly seemed to improve me last time, but the secondary effects are so unpleasant that it's a bit like sinking the ship to drown the rats." He was still interested in the affairs of the Freedom Defence Committee, which was waning fast from the sheer lack of enough supporters who at that time realized the need for a civil liberties organization untrammeled by party ties.

In the spring of 1949 my wife and I left England for Canada ("The sort of country that could be fun for a bit, especially if you like fishing," Orwell had commented when he heard of our plans), and we never seemed able to find the time for a trip to Gloucestershire before we went. It was one of those omissions one regrets after it cannot be rectified. After we reached Canada I wrote a couple of times to Orwell, but he was too sick to reply. We heard that he was getting worse and had gone into a London hospital, and then, at a Vancouver party one snowy evening in the first days of 1950, one of the guests came in and told me that Orwell was dead.

V

Since that time an image seems to have grown up in the popular mind, particularly in countries where his earlier books have been comparatively little read, of Orwell as a writer whose main message was one of anti-Communism. In fact, he had little in common with those frightened mediocrities who have nothing to offer but a negative opposition to the totalitarians. It is true that from many reviews of *Nineteen Eighty Four* one might gain the impression that it was devoted entirely to an attack on Communism, or even to an exposure of left-wing politics in general. Neither impression would be true.

Orwell did, indeed, detest the methods of the Communists, because he regarded them as both tyrannical and dishonest, and he saw in Russia

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an extreme example of the suppression of those humanist virtues which seemed to him essential for healthy social life. But it was only the most extreme, and not the only example, for he observed everywhere in contemporary politics the fatal tendency to displace in favor of expediency the necessary virtues of honesty and fair play. He gave a rather nominal support to the British Labor Government, but he realized that there also the dangers outlined in *Nineteen Eighty Four* existed, and his warning should be regarded as applying to any society where the cult of the state becomes more important than the welfare of individual men. Everywhere he saw, in varying degrees, that steady erosion of the personality whose final stage is, after all, the subject of his last novel.

Orwell, more than most of his contemporaries, represented in our time Matthew Arnold's conception of the man who is:

> Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born.

In many respects he was a survivor of the free-fighting liberals of the nineteenth century, a partisan of the values which men like Emerson, Thoreau and Dickens strove to maintain. But he also looked to a future in which he hoped men might outlive the night of tyranny and falsehood, of ignorance and mediocrity, into which we so often seem to be passing. None, indeed, knew better than he how heavy the odds were against such a hope, but he still thought it was worth fighting for with all the indignation and humanity of his nature.

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BRITISH LABOR IN RETROSPECT

Stanley R. Plastrik

> *"Some, indeed, said things were worse; that the morals of the people declined from this very time; that the people, hardened by the danger they had been in, like seamen after a storm is over, were more wicked and more stupid, more bold and hardened in their vices and immoralities than they were before; but I will not carry it so far neither."*
> —Daniel Defoe, *"Journal of the Year of The Plague"*

The third Labor Government of England, which held political power for somewhat more than six years, was the first in which the Labor Party ruled with full authority and responsibility. Two prior coalition governments had ended in disaster. A half century of Labor Party life, celebrated in 1950, found the party at its peak; a short time thereafter it was again plunged into defeat and crisis.

The Labor regime was the first effort to institute socialist policies, on some considerable scale, in a highly industrialized country, and simultaneously, to adopt these policies to a tradition of political democracy. Its brief experience, apart from an obvious intrinsic interest, must command the attention of everyone concerned with the idea of socialism and of everyone who hopes for democratic solutions to the problems of humanity.

I

No one contests the fact that British capitalism has experienced a severe decline during the twentieth century; but the idea that it is "doomed" is indignantly rejected by its defenders. They maintain, on the contrary, that Labor having failed to attain its objectives, British capitalism must now undergo a renaissance; is not this the sense of the new "Elizabethan epoch" now being presented to the world? It is freely admitted that at the time Labor took power in 1945, English capitalism had already under-

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NOTE: This article forms part of a larger unpublished study of Labor England.

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gone profound changes in its traditional structure, notably the partial paralysis of the free market economy. The ruling class of Great Britain, having gradually to give way before the rise of Labor, had likewise developed new and more sophisticated attitudes toward political life. Most important of all, they accepted the new role assumed by the state: as the center of economic planning and regulation; as the agency responsible for social security and the well-being of the population; as the power that would redistribute wealth and income. The political representatives of the British bourgeoisie, united in the Tory party, claimed paternity of certain planning principles, as well as of specific projects carried out by the Labor government. "During the last four years," declared Churchill in a speech of July 23, 1949, "they [the Laborites] have carried out projects prepared by the coalition government whose head I was." The Conservatives felt their revived social consciousness to be an extension of Disraeli's paternalistic "Tory socialism"; and their theoreticians, such as Richard Butler, in urging a modernization of party doctrine, accepted the notion of full employment, at least in its Keynesian sense, as well as the general concept of the Welfare State. They likewise agreed to state controls over the private sector of the economy and did not contest the need for nationalizing a number of industries.

Certain observers have therefore concluded that—apart from extreme wings in the two parties—a community of interests and a fundamental agreement existed between Labor and Conservative. Britain's bankruptcy and the liquidation of its world holdings at the end of the war naturally placed before both parties common problems and imposed a common, limiting framework in which to work out solutions. But beyond this, no common program really existed. In the long course of its history Great Britain's ruling class has always known how to adapt itself to new political and social situations. Its ability to compromise and make concessions at the decisive moment, to transform its inner structure and renew its leading personnel, has often been noted. J. H. Huizinga has admirably summarized this evolution over the course of centuries:

> At all times new elements have acquired fortune or power—the great woolen merchants of the XIV century, London's commercial community of the XV century, the courtiers and servitors of the Crown during the Tudor epoch, the bankers and armourers of the period of English world commercial expansion, the industrialists and colonial *nabobs* of the XIX century. All constituted reserve forces from whose ranks there emerged each time a new ruling class generation, at the same time possessing sufficient economic power to govern and a clear enough understanding of the needs of the time to prevent the fossilisation of this class and to safeguard its prestige. (*Le Monde,* March 14, 1952).

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But adaptation and compromise can take place only under certain conditions. It was possible for the British bourgeoisie to accept nationalization of coal, but not of iron and steel. The first measure not only could be absorbed within the body of the national economy but was required for its continued functioning. It neither undermined the nation's basic economic structure nor compromised its property relations, whereas the second measure threatened the existence of private industry and capital. Torydom's most temperate attacks against the Labor Government were directed against the principle of nationalization in general, while its most violent attacks were directed against the dynamic and self-extending character of nationalization in particular.

For it was this aspect of the Labor program—the tendency of nationalized industry to encroach upon private industry—which caused the greatest uneasiness in Tory circles. The development of nationalization tends to undermine the British capitalist class and compromises its faculty for resisting change. This was the most important difference between the two parties in the post-war period; and no compromise was possible. The two propaganda organizations formed by the Federation of British Industries (FBI) —known as the Economic League and the Aims of Industry movement— concentrated on the struggle against any *further* nationalization and for the safeguarding of private property when it still existed. The interventionist and regulatory State, however, was not only accepted in principle by the FBI, but was considered by it an integral part of economic planning. In a defense of the 1950 electoral program of the Conservatives, R. A. Butler, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said:

> We propose to develop and encourage what I call a "system of open enterprise." Under such a system every government must hold a position of strength. . . . It will have to determine, for example, what proportion of production is to be reserved for export. It will have to assure, likewise, a sufficient quantity of products so that everyone will have enough. . . . (BBC speech, February 20, 1949).

At the same time, the Conservatives recognized the need to regulate the distribution of goods and income according to new concepts. They admitted that the general clauses of the social security program must be kept by any Conservative government, even if the preservation of such aspects of the Welfare State would exclude fiscal reforms favorable to the wealthy class. Most significant of all in the attitude of the Tories and the bourgeoisie is their recognition that, in the words of Professor Arthur Lewis of the University of Manchester, "Nothing can be done without the consent of the workers." Aware that "politics is the art of the possible," the Conservatives are prepared to yield and thus to avoid any challenge to the

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property relations in the non-statified eighty per cent of the national economy, or to the decisive industries of that sector.

THE PORTRAIT OF THE AVERAGE English citizen under the Labor regime may be sketched as follows, according to Conservative standards: an individual overwhelmed by taxation, starved for meat, harassed by an all-pervading government bureaucracy, and living in a house (if the government's promise to build one had been kept) that was always poorly heated; the train (nationalized) which took him home from work always late; life drab, circumscribed, miserable; the little man on the point of being submerged.

Nor was this Conservative image mere propaganda, for it truthfully expressed many of the undeniable facts as well as the attitude of millions of people who supported the Tory party. But what image did the Tories propose in its place? There can be no precise answer to this question, for the Conservatives devoted themselves mainly to attacking the Labor government, while giving only secondary attention to developing their own point of view. And since the Tories have returned to power there have been few or no startling decreases in bureaucratic regulations or any of those restrictions and nuisances which they claimed were peculiar to the socialist mentality.

The general thesis might therefore be offered that Conservatism in England tends toward a "welfare capitalism," leaning upon a democratization or expansion of the property-holding class. Property, the claim goes, is no longer to be the privilege of industrialists or landowners; it is to be extended to the working class by a system of profit-sharing, bonus awards and distribution of company stocks. Economists understand, naturally, that real profits are distributed under the guise of dividends to holders of preferred stocks, not to holders of common stocks. Nonetheless, the Conservatives wish to see their formula of participation take on more popular forms.

The welfare capitalism that has just been described is in origin largely an American concept, but its delayed recognition by the British bourgeoisie has made it no less important for the latter. If, however, this conception has a real base in a country like the United States, supported by its high level of productivity, together with a mass production system that is content with a relatively low profit margin, it has no foundation in a country like Great Britain whose industrial plant is partly obsolete, whose economic opportunities have greatly and perhaps permanently shrunken, and whose economy cannot be salvaged on a national basis alone. The British bourgeoisie, which originally had rejected the Tory paternalism of the landed gentry in the name of the liberalism of the Manchester school, has by now reconciled itself to a kind of social paternalism. But it continues to

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oppose bitterly any effort to extend this principle to the basic areas of property; the notion of "co-association" between labor and capital, despite its advocacy by the leading circles of the Trade Union Congress and such spokesmen of the right wing of the Labor Party as Hugh Gaitskill, has been rejected by all the management associations.

That there would be a large measure of social planning in England was accepted by virtually every significant political group; it was the *kind* of planning, the social content and social purpose of the planning, that was and remains the major issue of political and, indeed, class contention. The sort of antediluvian elegies to *laissez faire* that appear in the reactionary American press are a luxury the British bourgeoisie can no longer afford: it recognizes that the field of contention has shifted, though the issue of contention remains unsettled.

IT HAS BECOME A COMMONPLACE, in consequence, to assert that England's political divisions—the existence of two great parties, each claiming half the nation—have little bearing upon the main question, the social question. Despite the innovations of the Labor regime, the social structure and its hierarchy—so continues the argument—remain intact. The objectives of socialist egalitarianism did not go beyond the dreams of certain intellectuals or old Fabian pioneers. A prudent French observer writes in *le Monde*:

> It is practically impossible to separate England into two camps, one Conservative and the other Labor. The boundaries criss-cross everywhere and imperceptibly displace one another. The weight of the entire system not only favors a profound solidarity of the different social categories but also facilitates a doctrinal drawing-together which, for six years now, has seen the Labor Party progressively renounce its socialist conquests and content itself with a simple "planning" program while, for their part, the Tories foresee only an extremely moderate return to free enterprise. (September 29, 1951).

This viewpoint, which at first glance seems in accord with the bitter reality of English life, is actually little more than an ideological reflection of the ability of English society in general and the bourgeoisie in particular to assimilate and nullify political and social changes. Advanced with smugness by neo-conservative and neo-classical economists, it is a point of view that has a curious similarity to the criticisms of the Labor regime formulated by the extreme left-wing of the socialist movement. This latter criticism refuses to believe that the Labor Party, as a "reformist" movement, could effect any major changes that go in the direction of socialism; failing to recognize any evolution in the mentality and motivations of the Labor

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leadership, such left-wing critics treat it as if it were still the classical Social Democratic or Fabian type. They still live on Trotsky's famous polemic of 1926 against the Labor leadership, *Where is Britain Going?*, in which he described the party's doctrine as an "amalgam of conservatism and liberalism" founded upon "a religion of progressive Christianity." Without hesitation Trotsky predicted that a Labor majority would be incapable of ruling since the police, judiciary and military would remain under bourgeois control; if Labor were to attempt the application of its program, including nationalization of credit, "civil war would be inevitable."

In part, Trotsky's erroneous prediction may be explained or explained away by noting first, the continuous decline of British capitalism and the disintegration of the empire, and second, the increasing strength of the working class movement. This made the British capitalist class—it may be said—too weak to oppose the Labor program; and besides, the British bourgeoisie, especially in moments of weakness, was too wily to risk everything in the hope of recouping limited losses. But this, if true, is only a partial explanation. It does not account for the fact that nowhere in Britain today can one see, even in embryo, any revolutionary or counter-revolutionary tendencies which think in terms of challenging through extra-legal means the past or possible future steps of a Labor government.

Both positions—the sophisticated conservative claim that the British Labor regime did not fundamentally alter the social structure but was forced by the pressure of reality to adapt itself to a more "moderate" vision, and the sectarian "Marxist" view that the British Labor regime was simply another reformist government out to "save capitalism" —both positions do not get very close to what has recently been happening in England. To do that it is necessary to take a closer look at the Labor Party itself, its present line of thought and its divergent inner tendencies.

A HISTORY OF THE LABOR PARTY would indicate that its initial doctrine—Fabianism—was transformed after the First World War and the MacDonald fiasco into a more active and aggressive anti-capitalist policy. If the party, because of the pressures of its conservative trade unionist sector, often seemed to lack initiative, it nonetheless developed its program in accordance with the needs of the moment, gained much practical administrative experience during the war-time coalition with the Conservatives and finally, when it took office, went far beyond the most sanguine hopes of its left-wing supporters and/or critics. The Labor government put Fabianism into practice, a Fabianism stretched to its uttermost limits.

This experience has ended in a partial social check and a major political defeat. The party is therefore passing through a difficult moment in its history—more profound than the MacDonald crisis which posed tactical

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rather than doctrinal questions. It must now rethink its program, reconsider its methods of action. And it is this, above all, which is the cause of the present internal struggle between the traditional leadership and the Bevan group.

The leaders who replaced the best representatives of the Fabian period have, in their turn, grown old. They have lost their dynamic qualities and appear exhausted by the enormous responsibilities they had to assume. The most striking personalities of this leadership, Ernest Bevin and Sir Stafford Cripps, are dead; the others show signs of fatigue. The two last important documents submitted to the party membership by the leaders, *Labour and the New Society* (1950 annual party Congress) and one for the 1953 Congress, lack imagination or boldness, largely repeat the old electoral declarations, and passively defend the defeated Labor government. In neither of these documents is it possible to find a strictly socialist content; for that aspect of the Labor program which permits it to speak in the name of the British people "as a whole" and to deal with economic problems within the limiting context of capitalism quite submerges socialist considerations. Out of power, the party leadership speaks as though it has remained in power, or expected to be restored to power before long.

But even as the active elite of the Labor government rejected the tactical methods and the more abstract theories of Fabianism, it was nonetheless deeply influenced by the general cast of Fabian thought. An important element in Fabian doctrine has been the idea of participation by the citizens in the management of public affairs, including workers' participation in the management of nationalized industries. Clement Atlee, who leads this group of party leaders, often expressed such typically Fabian views as appear in a book of his published in the 1930's:

> . . . it is necessary to foresee citizen participation in all phases of the organization of the socialist state and exercising of direct control by him over its immediate activities as well as an indirect control, through the intermediary of his representatives, over the policy of the state as a whole. . . . It has often been claimed that the manager and technicians will be bothered by the permanent functioning of workers' and consumers' committees. I do not think so. (*Purpose and Policy*).

It would be easy to cite similar statements with respect to the concentration in London of top-heavy economic power and the dangers of neglecting the need of decentralization in a socialist society. However, the essential characteristics of British socialism, formed by Fabianism, have largely been abandoned by those raised in the spirit of this doctrine. The statement on nationalization adopted at the recent Trade Union Congress, in

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effect, drops the concept of citizen participation. In its place there has emerged, at least in the more conservative ranks of the party and particularly among those who made up the recent Labor government, the concept of a bureaucratic socialism, statified and administrative. A journalist who often expresses the views of the Labor leadership, E. Watkins, offers the following definition of socialism:

> I would say that in a democracy, socialism is the tendency of the government to seek to favor those elements in society which will maintain a minimum and if possible produce a rising standard of living and well-being for the least capable of its citizens. (*The Cautious Revolution*).

This patronizing statement abandons, of course, any of the classical definitions of socialism. Instead of the traditional socialist emphasis on a libertarian, classless society we find an acceptance of the Welfare State, with its galling bureaucratic apparatus, as an end in itself. The very crudity of this statement makes it unpalatable to most leaders and members of the Labor Party, and consequently a more sophisticated version has been advanced by certain Labor Party spokesmen who recognize that the Welfare State must have a firmer base than mere political control of the state institutions. This version is a theory of the mixed economy, in a British form, in which governmental influence manifests itself in the permanent nationalized sector of the economy while the private sector is subject to indirect controls. John Strachey, former Marxian economist, has presented this view most systematically and intelligently. At a conference devoted to a defense of the official Labor regime Strachey said that it had attained its principal objectives while in power: (a) redistribution of wealth and incomes; (b) nationalization of the basic industries; (c) institution of controls over the private sector of the national economy; and (d) planning of national resources in terms of socially defined priorities. Strachey here advanced the view of the Labor Party administrative elite; that is, young party intellectuals who would appear to have been influenced more by Keynes than by Marxist or even Fabian socialism. This elite comprises thousands of administrators, functionaries, managers, technicians, economists and statisticians. To them must be added the trade-union elite which includes not merely the old-style leaders ripened under Bevin and Citrine but new trade-union secretaries and functionaries with some training in economic thought and capable of grasping the complexities of an annual *Economic Survey*.

The old civil service and government administration, tied together by tradition, was the creation of a liberal state representing the middle class and practising *laissez faire*. It neither wanted to nor could conceive of the organization of a full-production economy. During the last war it hesitated

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to extend state controls over industry; it possessed neither the personnel nor the experience necessary for guiding a managed economy. In the old administration and bureaucracy no groups favorable to social planning existed; before 1942 there was, symptomatically, no Ministry of Production.

But the planning state requires new types of administrators: managers, accountants, economists, engineers, consumers' advisors, statisticians, production experts—a whole set of specialists who, as Donald Kingsley writes in *Representative Bureaucracy,* are "capable of creating something" rather than merely "making reports and offering advice." Six years of war proved to be the training ground for just such a bureaucracy.

This new Labor elite, composed of technicians and administrators formed in the school of state interventionism, betrays a large amount of the bureaucratic outlook. Far removed from the world of work and the working class, this group believes that in realizing a program of social security and thereby making the concept of the Welfare State somewhat concrete, they have, as it were, abolished the worker, or proletarian, in the social and political sense of the word. He now becomes, instead, a new version of the "economic man" who not only takes his place as an item in the planning strategy of the government but is even assigned his "proper" rank in the nation's economic and social life. Precisely within this circle of Labor administrators and technicians, the role of the trade unions under a Labor Government—that is, the idea timidly put forward of limiting the independence and power of the unions—has been most frequently raised. This is one reason for the hostility often found among English trade union leaders toward the Labor functionaries; the tough old union leaders are suspicious of any effort to subordinate their organizations to the "necessities of planning."

According to this new group of Labor administrators, the hour of collectivization has sounded; power and authority will reside in the collectivized economy operated from above. This point of view has little in common with the idea of "welfare capitalism," since it demonstrates no confidence in the future of British capitalism. Such a party elite constitutes a new element in the labor movement—previous bureaucratic formations on top of Social Democratic parties were aggressively content to function within the framework of capitalist economy. This new group looks forward, however, to a society that can hardly be called socialist but which is also radically different from traditional capitalism; it counts upon an electoral return of the Labor Party to power and a continuation of nationalization, though at a slower pace.

The reaction to the Labor Government's weaknesses and the disappointment that followed upon its defeat provoked a still unsolved

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crisis in the party's ranks, of which the most dramatic outward sign is the rise of the Bevan group. The London *Times,* describing the left-wing of the Labor Party as a kind of English version of the *Fronde,* offered the following hostile remarks:

> There are now the pacifists and survivors of the old Independent Labor Party tradition; the intellectuals such as R. H. Crossman . . . the band of discontented leftists who have never had the slightest influence on policy and who have always been a minority; finally, a rabble of displaced persons some of whom would be more at home in the party's right wing. If this group of Labor deputies tried to present a constructive motion of its own making on the question of rearmament it would find it extremely difficult—if not impossible—to come to an agreement. (March 7, 1952).

But it must be remembered that this heterogeneous character of the Bevan tendency, though it offers the *Times* an occasion for a sneer, is due to the traditional British political system, which has always encouraged loose alliances of groups rather than precisely demarcated and monolithic parties. The difficulty of Labor's left wing in presenting a "constructive motion" might at first appear as a damning criticism of it and it alone; actually, this difficulty reflects a weakness of the whole movement. Bevanism takes its origin much more in the need for a general reorientation of party than from immediate questions posed by rearmament or foreign policy or the snide remark of the *Economist* that ". . . Mr. Bevan's position does not so much consist in his opposing tanks as in his attaching less importance to them than to false teeth." Bevanism was the instinctive response, the elementary reflex of the Labor Party to the dilemma it has been in since 1950, to stagnation and conservatism manifested by the government and party alike, to the dwindling away of the spirit and dynamism of 1945. G. D. H. Cole, excellent observer of British social and labor movements that he is, has noted that the implications of Bevanism from the start passed beyond the immediate and the sensational. How could a socialist democracy effectively counteract the totalitarian regimes with their capacity for organization and their techniques of total planning? In England, declared Professor Cole, the problem of reorganizing the economy along modern lines coexists with the problem of making certain that the transition to socialism proceeds in the fullest democratic way and is not allowed to degenerate into a bureaucratic collectivism. If the totalitarian and Stalinist solution is rejected then "the only way is to diffuse power, to distribute it among many hands, to base oneself upon the people who bring to power those who lead the groups to which the people belong. . . ." But this did not take place in Labor England. And Cole notes:

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> In Great Britain there is no room for this kind of leaders. The Labor Government did not try to favor them. Neither in the nationalized industries, nor in the trade-unions, nor in the cooperative movement did it let these veterans try their chance. (*The New Statesman and Nation,* May 5, 1951).

The revolt of Bevan and his supporters translated into concrete terms this feeling in the ranks of the party. Those who had always shown a certain critical and independent spirit with respect to the party's official policy were now able to take a leading part in this reexamination of party conscience. The struggle inside the party continues, though it oscillates between moments of intensity and moments of relative quiet. To be sure, the tradition of British Labor demands that practical compromises be reached, and everyone realizes that a split would be a catastrophe. Yet, as writers like Crossman have noted, it is precisely England's chronic economic crisis which makes practical compromises so difficult and increases the pressure for more fundamental solutions to the ideological problem before the Labor Party.

While rejecting the prefabricated notion that the Labor Government simply carried on where the bourgeoisie could or would not continue, we cannot avoid the conclusion that it did not undertake any *basic* transformation of social relations. The structure of British society did change, and in many important ways; the measures of nationalization and welfare legislation did have tremendous consequences; an important number of capitalists were dispossessed of their means of production and required to become state rentiers; millions of workers became employees of the state; there was a certain redistribution of revenues and income. But all this, while obviously important, does not yet constitute a basic change in social relations.

II

> Who is less free than the State worker? A struggle against the state, I say, can not only not succeed, it cannot even be undertaken. . . . The State as boss is the worker doubly enslaved because, held by the stomach, he is likewise gripped by the collar. (Jules Guesde in *Socialism and Public Service*).

Labor England formed a working class government under which, for over six years, political and social power was exercised by the popular, democratic party of the working class. It happened, however, that this exercise of power by the British workers through their political party appeared in indirect and contradictory ways. This helps explain the multitude of interpretations that have been made of the Labor regime. In the same issue of a French socialist review (*La Revue Socialiste*) we find, for instance, two contradictory views:

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> Six years of power have had practically no wearing effect whatever upon Labor; this is a symbol of the education of the English working class. . . . The workers remained faithful to Labor . . . a prompt revenge may be expected.
>
> . . . in six years of governing, the Labor Party exhausted its fund of socialist ideas . . . it failed to carry out self-criticism and self-education and limited its propaganda to a justification of its action. . . . If it wants to return to power it had better count not upon the imperfections of the Churchill government, but upon a new affirmation of the socialist ideal.

Outwardly contradictory, these statements by two different writers touch in reality upon different aspects of the Labor Party's crisis. One is concerned with the organic vigor of the labor movement, as well as the effects of its years in power; the other raises the question of the programmatic and doctrinal weaknesses of the same movement, its difficulty, if not incapacity, to adopt a new perspective when the old has foundered. On the one hand, the movement itself; on the other, its achievements and their value.

When Labor came to political power in 1945, it inherited an advanced capitalism which had not only accomplished an immense preparatory work, economically speaking, for the construction of a socialist order but also—again in the economic sense—had become organized and planified, thanks to the growth of state controls during the war years. The continuity between Britain's national economy of the war epoch and the economic and social program of Labor (the Beveridge Plan is most striking) cannot be too often stressed. The electoral victory of 1945, together with the social enthusiasm and militancy it aroused among the people, makes it no exaggeration to say that it constituted an elementary and embryonic conquest of political power by the working class. It is no more exaggerated to say that the perspective of the opening phase of a democratic transition to a socialist society existed.

The schema described by Lucien Laurat in his study of planified economy and socialization (*l'Economie Dirigée et Socialisation*) would seem to have found a classic expression in Great Britain. A democratic political party exercising power in the name of the working class; a state possessing the key industries; a vast program of social reforms supported by the middle class in the existing capitalist framework, the managed economy of wartime and its extension under Labor signified inter-penetration of state and economy; inter-penetration which, had it been pushed further, would have passed beyond nationalization into socialization. If statification of industries, or the nationalizations, had been effected by a government con-

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trolled by the conservatives (or any other bourgeois party), such measures, it seems to us, could be seen as falling under the heading of what is generally meant by that vague phrase "state capitalism." But such was not the case. They were applied by a government representing the working class. Regardless of the well-known fact that the elementary institutions of the working class had little or no share in the management and operation of these industries, the social meaning of nationalization under Labor had therefore a different sense. If it had desired, the Labor Party could have enlarged the collectivized sector of the national economy at the point where it had shown itself more capable than the private sector of solving the problem of production and productivity. It could have accommodated itself to the existence of the private sector by means of what Laurat calls a "managed competition." But the one crucial measure which the Labor Government seemed unable to take consisted in giving to those economic and social forms it had created an effective socialist content.

If the Labor leaders remained stationary at this point it was partly in consequence of a rather widespread idea in their ranks that British capitalism was coming to an end by itself. Keith Hutchison speaks of the "Fabian retreat of the forces of British capitalism before the slow progress of the political and industrial armies of Labor." There was much truth in this contention about the progressive foundering of English capitalism, but not as much as was believed. The error is to offer a simplified view of capitalism in defining it only according to such traits as the free market or the monopoly of political power by the bourgeoisie.

Nonetheless, the Labor Government made important incursions into British capitalism, touching upon all domains of production and distribution, including the regulation of conditions of work, the investment and employment of capital, the level and distribution of profits, etc. It would be absurd to persist in the view that Labor permitted the "old capitalism" to continue to live behind a new but transparent mask. Under the Labor Government, the state played the dominant role, and was sufficiently powerful to control and regulate all forms and expressions of social, political and economic life. State, government, public organisms, control, regulation, organization, planning, economic boards, commissions, etc.—such were the key words of Labor experience. But this terminology describes form and structure more than content and function. The Labor Government created the embryonic forms of a workers' state which might have served as the basis for a socialist society. This is what gave the regime its transitory character, making it neither capitalist nor socialist. But this transitional phase possessed neither the inner dynamics nor the favorable occasion to develop further. Facts, wrote Pirandello, are empty sacks into which must be poured a particular content if we want them to stand on their feet. The

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"facts" favorable to the beginnings of a socialist society were present or available: a working class party holding political power and with full authority to carry out its program; support of the workers and the middle class; nationalized sector of the economy; administrative apparatus for planning and control—but into this framework had been put only a partial socialist content.

In a work whose importance is insufficiently recognized (*Le Socialisme contre l'Etat*) the old Social Democratic theoretician Emile Vandervelde makes a fundamental distinction between *Statism* in which authority and the governing of men exists side by side with state control over cartels, trade unions and the main industries; and *Socialism* which is based upon the administration and management of things rather than of men. Vandervelde recognized the necessity and usefulness of state intervention in the first, transitory phases of socialist construction, but he urged that the success of the socialist experiment would depend on the rapidity with which this transitory phase was replaced by a genuinely socialist phase in which the workers managed industry, consumers were organized as articulate groups, and democratic mass participation reached unprecedented heights. "The phenomenon of socialization [as against mere nationalization of industry under bureaucratic state control] must become generalized and embrace the entire society," writes Serban Voinea, a Rumanian socialist theoretician. The juridical overturn which nationalization of industry constitutes must be accompanied not only by an administrative but also by a social change in its management; the managing bodies must include representatives of the wage earners, the consumers, the state, the technicians and the scientists. Such is the preliminary condition for new forms of collective activity in the administration of statified resources. This is a slow process, demanding learning and experience; it can be instituted only stage by stage, with measures that cannot be anticipated in advance; it probably requires a degree of international cooperation the British Labor Government could not expect; and it has, therefore, next to nothing in common with Trotsky's slogan of "workers' control of industry" the exact sense of which he never defined except in a political way, as a slogan for the revolutionary seizure of power.

In his book *Socialization*, Serban Voinea declares that this preliminary condition for socialism already existed in Great Britain toward the end of the Labor regime. He writes:

> Democratic practice at all levels of administration offer the guarantee that Great Britain will endeavor to and will succeed in creating in those industries which have become public property really democratic and socialist forms of organization and management.

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It is impossible to say upon what this assertion is founded, for it simply ignores both the facts about the Labor regime and the attitude of the party leadership. The internal crisis of Labor is in large part due to the fact that British socialism was not aware of the insufficiency of a simple transfer of the means of production to the public domain, or of the necessity for the workers to participate effectively in the management of industry.

This, of course, gives a new importance to a question already prominent at the end of the Labor regime: the social morale of the British people. However one may estimate the achievements of the Labor party, it would be hard to deny that the morale of a large part of the population is rather low, as is demonstrated by the widespread desire of Englishmen to emigrate. In the language of British sociologists, this is due to "modern poverty or second degree poverty." (See C. Zweig, *Labor, Life and Poverty.*) A symptom of this low morale is the desire to flee the dirt, boredom and general sadness of life in the great industrial centers of England. As is often the case, this manifests itself by a considerable increase in gambling, an industry which, officially, now employs 230,000 people and disposes of tens of millions of pounds sterling annually. Football pools, dog and horse racing as well as gambling machines of American manufacture absorb an important part of working class and lower middle class incomes; a considerable increase in the consumption of tobacco and drinks has also been noted. The problem of "second degree poverty"—that is, the absence of those goods, activities and pleasures which give a meaning to life, rather than the absence of those immediate and basic material requirements which define "primary poverty"—has assumed a new importance in Great Britain. It bedevils both Conservatives and Laborites, it is the visible symptom of the decline of a once great empire, and is the material from which future social and political clashes will be made.

Those who have studied the problem of industrial democracy—in England this means principally the Fabian Society—recognize that most important of all for the success of nationalization is what takes place in the mine pits, the workshops and the depots or centers of transportation. It is here that the new forms of democracy succeed or fail and that the workers recognize they hold a new power they did not hold before. The related question of workers' control of production, in itself complex and controversial, was never raised by the Labor Government. The hope nourished by certain Labor Party centers that the unions and their membership would one day know how to take into their hands management of the nationalized industries, was not realized. If the working class must master the technique of accounting and economic calculation as well as become acquainted with the responsibilities of finance in order to participate actively in the management of modern industry, then it must be admitted that Britain's workers

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are far from having attained such a level of development. If we may describe the objectives of workers' participation in management as being the creation of a feeling of freedom among the workers, the feeling of collaborating in a common cause; the joy of working, realizing and creating; the conviction of building a just social organization and of being at home and among one's own, then we must state the Labor Government fell far short.

The Labor Government did not establish those new social relations within industry or society as a whole which characterize socialism. There can be no question that the general situation of the working class improved while the power of the bourgeoisie declined. But what was most significantly improved was the political and economic position of the Labor leadership itself. This means that classic reformism, at least in Great Britain, had changed together with capitalism itself. Classic reformism had hardly dreamed of expropriating the bourgeoisie and infringing upon the rule of capital. But the British labor leaders did not hesitate to change their doctrine in accordance with the change of British capitalism. This implied the development of a different attitude toward private property and capitalist domination of the economy, which may be described as the intention to dispossess the holders of property without, however, permitting the installation of the rule of the workers themselves. The logical extension of such an attitude, if we abstract all the other political and social factors involved, would lead to ownership by the State of all the means of production and exchange, this State being in the hands of an omnipotent bureaucracy. But tendencies and forces already existed within the ranks of the labor movement itself which, together with the electoral defeat of 1951, called into question such an evolution by which the leadership of a mass movement tended to substitute itself for the movement and to provoke the crystallization of a bureaucracy disposing of immense powers.

It is the answer to this problem that will determine the next phase of the labor movement. "The substance of liberty demands a redefinition each time one is faced with a new combination of historic circumstances, for these circumstances produce a different effect," wrote Harold Laski. The historic circumstances which led to the formation of the Labor Government of 1945 are no longer the same. Thinking British socialists are attempting to redefine the substance of freedom in terms inspired neither by the Americans nor Russians. The point of departure seems to be the individual. Some believed they found this, in part, in the concept of planning which offered the possibility of establishing relations of a new type between equals; relations based upon reciprocity and which develop in the intellectual and moral consciousness norms of activity capable of aiding the transformation of society itself. These British socialists, in a word, are looking for the social

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content that would have to be introduced into the structure established during the Labor Government's rule if that structure, given labor's return to political power, is to move to a higher socialist plane.

A PLEA FOR MATERIALISM

"The pious ones, from the Pope to the yogis of California, are great on the 'change of heart,' much more reassuring from their point of view than a change in the economic system. Petain attributes the fall of France to the common people's 'love of pleasure.' One sees this in its right perspective if one stops to wonder how much pleasure the ordinary French peasant's or workingman's life would contain compared to Petain's own. The damned impertinence of these politicians, priests, literary men, and what-nots who lecture the working-class socialist for his 'materialism!' All that the working man demands is what these others would consider the indispensable minimum without which human life cannot be lived at all. . . . And how easily that minimum could be attained if we chose to set our minds to it for only twenty years! To raise the standard of living of the whole world to that of Britain would not be a greater undertaking than the war we have just fought. I don't claim, and I don't know who does, that that would solve anything in itself. It is merely that privation and brute labor have to be abolished before the real problems of humanity can be tackled. . . . How right the working classes are in their 'materialism.' How right they are to realize that the belly comes before the soul, not in the scale of values but in point of time."

GEORGE ORWELL

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THE ECONOMICS OF SELF-CONGRATULATION

Bernard Rosenberg

The latest discovery of certain intellectuals is a book called *American Capitalism: the Concept of Countervailing Power* by an ex-editor of *Fortune* and a Harvard Professor of Economics, John Kenneth Galbraith. Hard-boiled eggheads of what might be called the devitalized center, like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., have welcomed this work, and that perennial faddist, Stuart Chase, has hailed its author as the American Keynes, and more, a man who has taken the gloomy discipline of economics and restored it to "an objective science" (*The Reporter,* March 4, 1952). Keynes used to write highly esoteric treatises which required popularization whereas *American Capitalism* is directed at "the intelligent layman." Chase nevertheless succeeds in simplifying its contents still further, presumably for the somewhat less intelligent layman. The book stands as a specimen of popular culture. Galbraith has become a darling of such organizations as the ADA (Americans for Democratic Action), a major speech writer for their Presidential candidate (Stevenson, that is, not Eisenhower) and a teacher whose thinking elicits gratitude among those "baffled by the failure of other theories" to provide a pattern "that so well explains the stubborn facts" (Chase).

American Capitalism purports to be an explanation of why our economy works so well in spite of the Cassandras who regularly predict its collapse. The adjective "American" is essential because this form of capitalism is like none other on earth. The free play of economic forces has virtually disappeared; monopoly, duopoly, and oligopoly are more often the rule than not; the market does not regulate itself. In short, American capitalism is like the maiden who has been deflowered but retains her virginity. This is a metaphysical process; however the higher transcendentalism has always been an integral part of American thought. Nor is any harm done if we take an institution, strip it of nearly all its key characteristics, and go on calling it by the same name.

The competitive model constructed by Adam Smith and his followers does not apply to contemporary America where a small

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number of industrial giants rule the roost. This Galbraith proves in convincing detail. There has been a marked shift of power from the finance capitalist to the huge impersonal corporation. The former's decline is symbolized for Galbraith by J. P. Morgan, Jr., whose impotence in 1929 is contrasted with his father's spectacular success in overcoming the panic of 1907. Crises of this sort are no longer averted, if they ever were, by the financial virtuoso. Galbraith, like practically every other economist save Ludwig Von Mises, Frederick Hayek, and other members of their Eighteenth Century school of thought, sees this situation as one in which bigness has replaced individualism. Instead of countless small entrepeneurs, there is a limited number of small businessmen, totally eclipsed by the few large corporations that are in control. No Magic Hand can benignantly interpose itself among competitors who in an earlier age unwittingly served the commonweal by serving themselves; they have been swallowed up and superceded. Competition, as an effective regulatory mechanism, is gone and, with it, all traditional restraint on private power has disappeared. Adam Smith would have regarded this development as a calamity. Not so Galbraith. For, in his judgment, it has worked out to our universal advantage. Corporations have enormous power which could be, and if Smith were right could not but be, abused; yet that power goes unexercised. It is to this "paradox" that the author addresses himself.

His answer is relatively simple. It consists in the emergence of "countervailing power," a new form of restraint which is nurtured by concentration and produces an automatic antidote to corporate control. Thus, "Private economic power is held in check by the countervailing power of those who are subject to it." Indeed, the first begets the second. Strong sellers have produced strong buyers. Galbraith indicates that the operation of this principle is to be seen most clearly in the labor market, its *locus classicus*. The worker's relative immobility made him highly vulnerable in the past. Even if underpaid and dissatisfied, he needed work and ordinarily could not move.

> Not often has the power of one man over another been used more callously than in the American labor market after the rise of the large corporation. . . . No such power is exercised today and for the reason that its earlier exercise stimulated the counteraction that brought it to an end.

Thus, as a general rule, there are strong unions in the United States where there are strong corporations, that is, the automotive, steel, electrical, rubber, farm machinery, and smelting companies all of which bargain with powerful CIO unions. "By contrast," writes Galbraith, "there is not a single union of any consequence in American agriculture, the country's closest

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approach to the competitive model." Here the "American Keynes" comes a cropper. Surely no segment of our economy is more *removed* from the competitive model than agriculture with its subsidies, parities, regulated prices and guaranteed profits. Who is less of an independent entrepreneur and more of a government beneficiary than the American farmer? Is it accidental that Presidential candidates must outbid each other in promising not to relinquish control over the farmer and that the candidate who bids highest will often get elected? What law of *laissez faire* economics is illustrated by the government's purchase of nearly $2,000,000 worth of butter a day for an indefinite period so that the price of this commodity will not drop in open competition with oleomargarine? One suspects that the composers of the following parody performed at a recent meeting of the Gridiron Club (reported in the *New York Times,* April 12, 1953) were closer to the mark.

> We've got to keep butter up
> Poor little butter up
> Since those elections are nigh,
> So buy all the butter up
> Price-support butter up
> Or kiss the farm vote goodbye.

The golden mountain of grease, turning rancid, first inedible, then unusable even for industrial purposes, is an excellent symbol of the new mercantilism actually governing American agriculture.

Galbraith pursues his point. "In the Great Valley of California the large farmers have had considerable power *vis-à-vis* their labor force. Almost uniquely in the United States, that region has been marked by persistent attempts at organization by farm workers." Can this be countervailing power? The wretched undernourished migrant pitted against a coequal force and successfully neutralizing it? Surely this does not support the Galbraithian position. But perhaps we have misunderstood that position even though it seemed to be unambiguous. For,

> I do not advance the theory of countervailing power as a monolithic explanation of trade union organization; in the case of bituminous coal mining and the clothing industry, for example, the unions have emerged as a supplement to the *weak* (!) market position of the operators and manufacturers.

Not only does power generate power, but weakness generates power: x and its opposite, y, yield the same result. This might be construed to mean that labor organization is on the march, and that weak or strong, no one

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can resist it. However, Galbraith realizes that the labor force is far from being fully organized and he suspects that the times are not propitious for further unionization. There are many important areas in which the worker has not organized to confront the weak *or* the strong employer. Galbraith's theory may be symbolically represented in this way: x produces z; y produces z; neither x nor y produces z. Whatever the logical magnificence of this formula, it is of doubtful scientific value.

WHITE COLLAR WORKERS IN AMERICA are among the notoriously unorganized despite their membership in a new middle class whose recent growth has been fantastic. Obviously they cannot countervail anyone or anything. Galbraith serenely passes over them to the distributive industries which exercise another kind of countervailing power, that of the retailers as opposed to the suppliers. The interests of these two groups are "normally . . . at sharp variance": the retailer wants to drive prices down and the manufacturer wants to keep them up. Hence, the retailer has "both a protective and profit incentive to develop countervailing power whenever his supplier is in possession of market power." For fifty years, we are told, this development has been practically manifested in the rise of chain stores, mail order houses, and co-operative buying organizations. Previously-established positions of power have thus been counteracted. For instance, says Galbraith, the rubber industry, dominated by four big firms, is a clear-cut oligopoly. Its grip on the consumer is weakened considerably by mammoth distributors like Sears, Roebuck and Company which, in the thirties "was able . . . to procure tires from Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company at a price from twenty-nine to forty percent lower than the going market. These it resold to thrifty motorists for from a fifth to a quarter less than the same tires carrying the regular Goodyear brand." What Sears, Roebuck and Company can do with tires, the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company does with cornflakes, and so with other articles bought and sold by Montgomery Ward, Woolworth's, Kresge's, and the department store chains.

This type of retailer takes on such importance because he can exploit his role as a large and indispensable customer. He has many weapons at his disposal to use against the market power of his supplier. Of these, none works so well as the "ultimate sanction" to develop his own sources of supply, something, "the food chains, Sears, Roebuck, and Montgomery Ward *have extensively done.*" Just so. But what does this mean? And how can it be reconciled with the "theory of countervailing power?" It means that in this instance the distributors have *become* the producers. And it cannot be reconciled with the "theory of countervailing power." When this consolidation of retailer and supplier takes place, as it does most extensively, there is no "sharp variance," but rather a total identity of interest. When

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A & P manufactures cornflakes and helps oligopolize the cereal market, when Big Production and Big Distribution are wedded, what force mediates between them to maintain this best of all possible economic systems?

Galbraith's technique is to lay down a fixed rule, and then riddle it with exceptions. Thus:

> There are producers of consumers' goods who have secured themselves from exercise of countervailing power. Some, like the automobile and the oil industry, have done so either by integrating their distribution through to the consumer or because they have an organization of small and dependent and therefore fairly powerless dealers. It seems probable that in a few industries, tobacco manufacture for example, the members are strong enough and have sufficient solidarity to withstand any pressure applied to them even by the most powerful buyer.

Presently, one is hard put to it to differentiate between rule and exception. The classical economist could say that he was merely conceptualizing, that his model was not to be confused with reality, that perfect equilibrium was a useful fiction, and that therefore, he did not blind himself to such factors as war and depression which constantly upset his well-ordered universe. Galbraith's argument is of the opposite order. He does not deal in abstractions, manipulate concepts, build a continuum, and deliberately isolate one sphere from another for purposes of scientific analysis. His objective is rather to describe the operative economic processes of our society, to delineate and to exalt conditions as they are in their totality. This leads him into bold generalizations that are either disemboweled by qualification or nullified by illogicality. When one adds the cigarette or soap manufacturer and all those others whose retail outlets are numbered in hundreds of thousands to, let us say, the film maker with his unbroken control over distributors, it is scarcely possible to entertain Galbraith's image of American capitalism as something close to an enormous consumers' cooperative.

THE AUTHOR FURNISHES US WITH A FURTHER EXAMPLE of successful resistance to countervailing power, namely the residential building industry. Here, with many thousands of small firms, we have a close approximation of the competitive model. Yet, "The industry does show many detailed manifestations of guild restraint. Builders are frequently in alliance with each other, the unions, and local politicians to protect prices, wages, and to maintain established building techniques." This poses a theoretical problem of considerable magnitude. It would not trouble the old-fashioned economist who has a ready-made answer which alternately repels Galbraith, attracts him for a while, and finally fractures his theory. Liberal critics of

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the building industry, when they see poor performance combined with criminal collusion, simply favor the removal of what they regard as artificial restraints. This, however, rests on the illusion that a competitive situation can obviate such shortcomings as are present in the building industry. Less competition, not more, is clearly in order, since even if all the restraints were swept away prices would probably remain too high and customers would be no more satisfied than they are today. "The typical builder would still be a small and powerless figure" contending against unions that are, inexplicably, far stronger than he and buying his materials "in small quantities at high cost from suppliers with effective market power." Hence we need fewer and bigger firms like Levitt & Sons of Long Island who have established their own building-supply company to buy materials for large-scale production of homes.

This is one possible answer to the problem. But Galbraith does not rest content with it. He crosses over to the liberal's side by advocating selective use of antitrust legislation specifically against "workers in the building trades" who, "although they are not highly organized or exceptionally powerful in any absolute sense, are strong in relation to the small-scale employers with whom they do business." These unions are possessors of original market power and, therefore, in need of countervalence. This makes "the restrictive practices of master plumbers or plasterers a proper object of interest by the Department of Justice." But Galbraith has already argued persuasively that such meliorist moves, however successful in eliminating every restriction, would not solve the basic problem. He deplores the judicial precedent which disallows antitrust prosecution of labor and farm organizations whose restrictive practices should be vigorously combated by the federal government. To what end? To the end that competition be restored? This is the stated purpose of all antitrust legislation no matter what its target may be. Galbraith points out that a few builders have circumvented jobbers' and retailers' margins and thereby notably increased the satisfaction of their customers. Moreover, he asserts, "Few can doubt that the future of the industry, if its future is to improve on its past, lies with such firms." Much improvement was achieved, not through government intervention on behalf of builders but by the creation of bigness where there was smallness. It is possible, and in the case of Levitt, probable that federal housing could have produced even more satisfaction—without legal proceedings against plasterers and plumbers. After all, what is countervailing power if not the opposite of competition? Galbraith plumps for the former and inveighs against the latter, only to fuse them when he tackles a concrete case. Earmarks of the liberal appear on this anti-liberal economist, fully half of whose book is a diatribe against the classical school to which he is fitfully committed.

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THIS CONFUSION IS MOST EVIDENT in Galbraith's appraisal of the New Deal. He believes that it was unconsciously on the right track. Since it is enormously difficult for individuals to coalesce and organize countervailing power, government assistance is frequently needed in performing this task. Under Roosevelt it became the major domestic function of a government whose leaders did not fully understand what they were doing. The result was that countervailing power would be judiciously applied in some cases and misapplied or misdirected in others. Galbraith's criticism of New Deal clumsiness centers upon the antitrust laws which "have been indiscriminately invoked against firms that have succeeded in building countervailing power, while holders of original market power . . . have gone unchallenged. . . . The effects have been damaging to the economy and also to the prestige of the antitrust laws."

Nowhere does Galbraith show how the effects have been damaging to the economy, and the prestige of the antitrust laws had already reached a nadir in 1937 when Truman Arnold wrote *The Folklore of Capitalism.* This former assistant attorney-general had striven to enforce the antitrust laws as a New Dealer. He sums up his experience in a chapter entitled, "The effect of the antitrust laws in encouraging large combinations," and appends a resume:

> In which it is shown how the antitrust laws enabled men to look to a highly centralized industrial organization and still believe that it was composed of individuals engaged in buying and selling in a free market.

To "invoke" the antitrust laws, including the Robinson-Patman Act which Galbraith likes least because it was "invoked" against A & P, is to engage in ritual behavior. It supports the governing *mythos* without altering economic behavior. We persist in regarding bigness as a curse and go through the make-believe of fighting it. This ceremonial affirmation of our faith makes us feel better while the big get bigger. It is not only harmless activity, but it provides a splendid income for many lawyers and serves as a cohesive force in American society. Galbraith, for all his realism, has been taken in by the myth makers. For there is a simple fact that he leaves unmentioned: the anti-trust laws are unenforceable. Even Galbraith refers to their invocation, not their implementation. Does it much matter whether the Robinson-Patman Act is invoked against A & P and goes unenforced or, alternatively, to suit Galbraith's preference, whether it is invoked against A and P's suppliers, and goes unenforced? Not unless we enter Never-Never Land.

Adam Smith propounded an economic theory that is hardly separable from his moral philosophy. Therein the "is" and the "ought to be" can seldom be disentangled. Galbraith perpetuates the tradition of his great

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predecessor and extends it, by viewing a world we never made with the utmost satisfaction. That world—in which countervailing power works perfectly and everyone prospers—is of Galbraith's own creation. In it, although the specific mechanism is changed, such old trappings as automaticity and equilibrium remain, and they still inspire a state of euphoria. It is unkind to thrust the harsh real world on so rosy a dream world, but one is constrained to do so when Galbraith makes the transposition.

WHAT HAVE WE ACTUALLY EXPERIENCED in the second quarter of this century? A boom and a slump of unparalleled scope, followed by participation in a world war, a cold war, and a limited war with only three or four years of interwar "normality." During all of this time except for the depression era, we have been plagued with inflationary pressures. What is the major limitation which Galbraith places upon his theory? That it does not apply during periods of inflation. Then all the rules are off. Galbraith puts it to us with great lucidity:

> Countervailing power as a restraint on market power only operates when there is a relative scarcity of demand. Only then is the buyer important to the seller and this is an obvious prerequisite for his bringing his power to bear on the market power of the seller. The countervailing power of the buyer, however great, disappears with an excess of demand. With it goes the regulatory or restraining role of countervailing power in general.

In between our two great periods of inflation, there lay a period of deflation which covered most of the thirties, a decade when our economic structure tottered so badly it almost collapsed. It is precisely in the thirties that Galbraith sees countervailing power at its best, that is to say, when the country was economically at its worst. Deflationary conditions are especially conducive to the emergence of countervailing power. Thus, with the benevolent cooperation of FDR, unions quadrupled in size and made their power felt across the bargaining table, while the early depression years were particularly favorable to chain stores. Since that time there has been a slackening of both trends. In short, when countervailing power reached its peak, much of our production ground to a standstill, consumption declined, and from ten to fifteen million men languished in unemployment. Conversely, when countervailing power did not function at all, as Galbraith would admit it does not today, production and consumption shot up and unemployment was nearly liquidated. What can one say about countervailing power as the key to an understanding of our economy when it is inoperative in inflation and ineffective in deflation? What does this leave for further analysis?

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It leaves the period just after World War II and just before the war in Korea. The military machine was reduced to minimal peace-time proportions and arms production came to a halt. Nevertheless we did inordinately well during that period; there were jobs aplenty; our productive capacity increased and passed all prior peaks; the standard of living went up. The professional economist, with his habitual gloom, had foreseen many difficulties and dislocations which did not materialize. And the businessman had felt a deep, but ostensibly unwarranted, uneasiness about his situation. Nevertheless, "high production and generous profits" continued. The economy flourished, but its workings were misunderstood, and therefore fear and free-floating anxiety prevailed. Properly understood, Galbraith says, this was a period in which countervailing power achieved its crowning glory, vindicating American capitalism and definitely establishing its healthy character. But, countervailing power is impotent during inflation; the post war years were inflationary; hence the need for a little legerdemain.

"The experience of the years from 1945 to 1950 [which is stretching it a bit—B.R.] showed that the economy possessed what may loosely be termed a deflationary potential." In other words, prices and wages were going up, but these are merely conventional criteria of inflation which must be subordinate to what may loosely be termed a deflationary *potential.* This may be exactly termed a grotesque inversion of plain fact. Given little dips and rises, the inflationary spiral has not abated since 1938. From that time to this, all Galbraith's rules are off.

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF *American Capitalism* is entitled The Insecurity of Illusion by which Galbraith means the Illusion of Insecurity. He is concerned with the organization and management of an economy that not only works but, in defiance of established rules, works quite brilliantly. What puzzles him is that all this inspires no confidence among businessmen who are the chief beneficiaries of that system He concludes not that the system is defective—how can it be?—but that the minds of businessmen are diseased. Following World War II:

> Business had recovered much of the prestige it had lost during the depression; except at election time (and this has been rectified—B.R.) it was again treated with marked courtesy by the government. Yet there was little evidence that businessmen . . . viewed their prospects with equanimity. . . . Here then is the remarkable problem of our time. We find ourselves in these strange days with an economy which, on grounds of sheer physical performance, few are inclined to criticize. . . . Yet almost no one feels secure in the present.

And at that point Galbraith makes a leap into Idealism. "It can only be that there is something wrong with the current or accepted interpretation

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of American capitalism. This, indeed, is the case." The conservative, and for that matter, the liberal, is captive to a body of illusory ideas which cause him "to view the world with misgivings or alarm." Here we enter the domain of psychopathology. When men are fearful in face of success, when they suspect that "private capitalism is inherently unstable," then it is *they* who are inherently unstable and *their* behavior which is irrational. If doubts and suspicion and pessimism are based on illusion, this is surely a sound diagnosis and colossal psychotherapy would cure economic ills whose center is not in the market but in the minds of men.

The imputation of irrationality is a familiar one. When workers at a General Electric plant—studied to death by Elton Mayo and his associates —refused to increase output even though they were offered higher wages for extra effort, they were deemed to be irrational. There was no good reason for refusing to cooperate with management except that if they did these workers would have jeopardized their jobs at a time when jobs were not come by so easily. This never occurred to anyone in the entire Harvard School of Business Administration.

Similarly Galbraith is dismayed by the fact that men exposed all their lives to shock, panic, slump, bust, recession, and depression—punctuated by war—should be wary of present appearances and future prospects. There is an elementary difference between rational fear and irrational fear. The libertarian who is not afraid of Soviet totalitarianism today should have his head examined. No one will question the sanity of him who points to the danger. Ideas which cause us "to view the world with misgivings and alarm" were never more in order than at the present apocalyptic moment in history. This is no less true of economics than of politics. Emile Durkheim has pointed out that when an "illusion" is shared by virtually every member of the society it is likely to have a substantial basis. He may not understand that basis, but he is aware of its existence. When nearly everyone from left to right senses economic instability, it is probably real, and in this case, demonstrably real.

For a decade after the Crash of 1929 we were struggling under New Deal auspices to regain our economic balance. In this we never succeeded. Dr. Win the War supplanted Dr. New Deal. We won the war, and many of us experienced sinking sensations about what would happen after the initial boom wore off. The boom was perfectly predictable. It had come after World War I—and brought disaster in its wake. There is a non-Galbraithian explanation for the enormous prosperity immediately following World War II. It is far more cogent, and not the less so for being a product of common sense. Through the all-out war years, consumer demands could not be met; wages and profits were high and savings considerable; then, we geared up for peace-time production. Men who had not

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been able to buy automobiles or refrigerators or homes for years, whose real income was higher than it had ever been, who had money in the bank, these men and their wives went on a national buying spree. The goods were in demand and, for a while, they could not be supplied fast enough. But, be it noted that for many months before Korea, *that market was reaching a saturation point.* All the ominous prewar problems were beginning to reappear. But for the North Korean aggression we would have to be facing them today as we may have to be facing them tomorrow. The number of Koreas, the number of World Wars, we can stand is certainly finite. More than one Great Power has gone bankrupt in the winning of such wars.

CAN THE ECONOMICS OF SELF-CONGRATULATION SAVE US? Will it help to emancipate the American from his so-called illusions when they are actually grounded in reality? Or does it make better sense to admit our perilous position and cast about for means to better it? There is no doubt that General Eisenhower struck a responsive chord in the American public when he promised it "peace and prosperity," something he obviously cannot deliver so long as prosperity is dependent upon war and war threatens ultimate exhaustion. In the long run our survival may depend upon devising a system that will take us through, around, or out of this maze. When there is word of a "peace scare" or a "Malenkov depression" and the stock market falls, this is a barometer of our justifiable apprehension about the day after tomorrow.

Galbraith finds it remarkable that there is no "plausibly enunciated alternative to the present system." If we accept his premise that the present system works beautifully, there is no need for an alternative and we may rejoice with him in its absence. On the other hand, if we accept the facts of life, there is nothing to stop us from adopting an experimental approach to problems that may be susceptible of solution. Only professional apologetics for an unsatisfactory status quo can bar the way. The very dearth of preconceived plans can be converted into an asset by those who welcome experimentation, innovation, synthesis or reform.

Galbraith's voice is but one in a mighty chorus of affirmationism that swells sonorously as it drowns out dissent. Intellectual agnosticism, the precondition for all fruitful scientific work, was never harder to maintain. The custodians of our culture urge us to be "positive." Pangloss has been apotheosized and his spirit, transmuted into a kind of Couéism, pervades the land. While the whole species is threatened with extinction *Homo Americanus* summons his writers and his scholars to sing his praises, to reconstruct his past and glorify his future, to whistle in the dark. A good dose of corrosive criticism may turn out to be more "constructive" than everything in the yea-sayer's repertoire.

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Miscellany

A NOTE ON ATROCITIES

Helen Mears

NOTHING BETTER ILLUSTRATES the moral schizophrenia of our society than the generally accepted notion of what constitutes a wartime "atrocity." We are constantly reminded that international conferences have labored to work out rules to govern the treatment of prisoners-of-war in order to protect captured soldiers from unnecessarily brutal treatment. Simultaneously techniques of warfare have been developed which make civilians the major victims of war, and whatever torture or horror these non-combatants must put up with are accepted as "necessary" aspects of total war. This means that by the old standards of today one's own fighting men, when captured by an enemy, are entitled to more humane treatment than are the enemy's women and children whose murder — by explosives, fire, or starvation — is not considered to be an atrocity when committed by "our side." This attitude, of course, is true for "both sides" in any conflict.

An illustration of our own moral schizophrenia was provided on page 3 of the *New York Times* for Aug. 21, 1950. There, virtually side by side, were two enlightening items: One was a speech by General MacArthur, denouncing the North Koreans for atrocities to prisoners-of-war and threatening dire punishments for the commanding officers who might be considered responsible; the other was a column by Hanson Baldwin (*The Times* military expert) explaining that our strategic bombing in Korea—by which we had destroyed whole industrial areas and killed numerous women and children—was losing us friends among the Korean population.

These two items seem to spell out our predominant attitude toward atrocities. On the one hand, mistreatment of captured U. S. soldiers is considered to be a crime for which North Koreans could be brought to trial and punished. On the other hand, the slaughter of Korean women and children by our Strategic Bombing Command is criticized only on the grounds that it might prove to be unsound tactics, since it might arouse antagonism which would interfere with future political operations.

On October 28 of 1953, the U. S. Army released an 87-page extract from a report of its "Korean War Crimes Division" which, according to the *New York Times,* included the "grisly description of the fate of thousands of prisoners-of-war" illustrated by "fourteen pages of official photographs."

This U. S. report of North Korean and Chinese atrocities against "our side" may find a place on Asiatic bookshelves next to a similar picture-book published in Japan this past August. The Japanese volume consists of 146 pages of photographs of Tokyo taken after the mass bombing raids by the U. S. Strategic Bombing Command during World War II—scenes of ruin, piles of charred bodies, and similar horrors. That the Japanese consider these mass raids as "atrocities" is suggested by the captions: "Charred bodies of a young mother and her baby"; "In the repeated B-29 raids, 540,000 houses were burnt and 2,860,000 people lost their homes"; "The residential section of Tokyo was particularly vulnerable to incendiary bombs because

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of the highly inflammable nature of the houses of wood and paper. A night's bombing left it wasteland."

An American, thumbing through this volume today would probably feel distress at the pictures, but would be unlikely to equate these civilian victims of U. S. mass-bombing with similar scenes in Korea today; and would certainly not equate the victims of U. S. mass-bombing, in either Japan or Korea, with the victims of either Japanese or Stalinist atrocities. Yet it is a fact, well-documented in our own press, that our techniques of waging total war in Korea (as formerly, in Japan) have subjected civilians to appalling cruelties, and have produced such total devastation (with slow death from disease and starvation so prevalent) that any attempt to isolate some particular act or acts as "atrocities" can serve only to dramatize the artificiality of such moral standards.

THIS IS THE MORE TRUE because of the fact that although some of the atrocities, charged against the North Koreans and Chinese enemy by the U. S. Army, were caused by deliberate brutality either to gain information, or to satisfy sadistic impulses — the majority (as reported) were caused by conditions of war over which the enemy had no control. According to the *New York Times* analysis of the Army report, the majority of the atrocities consisted of long marches to prisoner-of-war camps under terrible conditions; and neglect in prisoner-of-war camps including poor food, little or no medical attention, and "callous treatment" including beatings. Deaths caused by such conditions are of course atrocities when judged in human terms. But the term "atrocity" — when used in the official sense — is a "legal" term carrying with it the stigma of international condemnation, and the threat of legally administered punishment. A "legal" atrocity is a deliberate cruelty or injustice not necessitated by the exigencies of war; and if the reports in the U. S. press can be taken as evidence, these "death-marches" were not due to deliberate brutality. The prisoners-of-war were made to march because the enemy did not have transport; and the conditions were terrible because the marches took place in a country overwhelmed by war, and at a time when the U. S. Strategic Bombing Command was blasting railroads, strafing roads, and causing general chaos. Similarly the bad food and poor medical service in the POW camps seems, in general, not due to deliberate brutality or callousness, but to the fact that food was limited for everybody and medical supplies were scarce. Conditions for the enemy — soldiers and civilians alike — were, in general, as bad if not worse than those reported for POW. Given the fact of war the major crime of which the enemy was guilty was poverty. Under the actual conditions in Korea many of these deaths were as unavoidable as though these men had been shot down in combat.

The U. S. Army report on "Red" atrocities charged that 1,057 to 2,384 Americans died in "death marches." No American can face such a possibility without shock and bitterness. Such natural grief for our own dead, however, ought not to blind us to the fact that our way of fighting the war—by total destruction of all industry, along with cities, towns, and farming villages — caused casualties into the hundreds of thousands of civilians, and brought total destitution to virtually the entire surviving population of the country. Some of our correspondents have faithfully reported our uninhibited bombing operations, and not a few of them have condemned them, not only as avoidable, but as destructive of American ideological and political interests, not only in Korea but throughout Asia. So far, however, popular opinion, which rises to a fury at the report of a "Red atrocity" against an American soldier, has seemed totally indifferent to our own mass production atrocities against Korean civilians.

THE DESTRUCTION OF KOREA beggars description. Press accounts from American correspondents describe a nation whose industry, agriculture, communications, cities, towns and villages have been turned into rubble heaps. Millions of people are herded into makeshift refugee concentration camps, perpetually one jump ahead of literal starvation, and

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thousands die every day from hunger, exposure and disease. During 1953, in a series of articles reporting on conditions in Korea, Dr. Howard A. Rusk, medical expert for the *New York Times,* wrote that: "Four years of fighting have resulted in nearly 1,000,000 civilian casualties and complete destruction of nearly 500,000 homes. Other statistics are equally staggering — 9,000,000 dislocated people, 100,000 orphans and 300,000 widows. Writing of the ROK capital, Seoul, Dr. Rusk described it as a city whose "pre-war population of 1,500,000" was reduced "to around 700,000"; with "all public utilities and industries . . . either obliterated or seriously damaged." . . . Smallpox, typhoid and typhus rates skyrocketed and thousands of persons froze or starved to death."

When a prisoner of war freezes or starves to death in a "death march" it is an "atrocity," and the U. S. Government presents a report to the UN and asks for public debate and condemnation. When civilians starve or freeze, camped out on the rubble of their bombed-out homes it is considered to be a deplorable but unavoidable condition of modern war. This is to say that whatever miseries we have caused, although we may deplore them, are accepted as having been "forced on us." Simultaneously we assume that miseries caused by the enemy prove his sadistic nature.

On August 30, Dr. Rusk wrote: *"Each evening* at dusk refugee mothers with their sick children still line up quietly before the Maryknoll Sisters clinic in Pusan so they may be among 2,000 patients to be seen *the next day.* (Ital. added). The ROK Army hospitals are still crowded with 20,000 disabled men whose definitive care has been completed but who cannot be discharged as they have no place to go. There will be 8,000,000 Koreans, primarily in rural areas, who must rely on 'herb doctors' for their medical care as no trained physicians are available."

In view of such medical conditions all over Korea it is not necessary to assume a sadistic nature on the part of "the enemy" to account for their neglect of prisoners of war.

The Army's report on "Red atrocities" is illustrated in the *New York Times* by a picture showing "civilian victims of North Koreans being removed from mass grave at Chonju." This shocking scene must be a commonplace in Korea, with civilian victims of both sides buried in "mass graves," and—if we can believe our own correspondents—lucky to be buried at all. For example, turn back to the *New York Times* of Jan. 19, 1951 and read the account of the "two million refugees, most of them hungry and cold, frantically seeking to escape from the narrowing war front . . . in the midst of such misery death is such an 'informal affair' that burials are not only performed without ceremony, but hundreds of bodies lie about unburied until the military authorities have to step in and take action if only to clear the way for unhampered military operations."

Under such conditions, how is it possible to assign responsibility for bodies dug out of mass graves?

THE PROBLEM OF WHAT CONSTITUTES an atrocity needs some popular discussion. The U. S. military regulations establish standards for the behavior of American troops and any individual who transgresses can be dealt with severely under military law. An individual American—outside of combat—who kills or mistreats a Korean is liable to arrest, trial and punishment. At the same time, however, our top military command increasingly steps up its terroristic methods of warfare which assume that any civilians who happen to get in the way of military operations are as "fair game" as the armed forces of the enemy. Anyone who will bother to go back through the files of the *New York Times* (to mention only one source) and read the accounts of our war-making by our own correspondents must conclude that the idea of total destruction of a nation not only does not disturb our high military command, but is accepted as legitimate war-making.

For example read the account of a paratrooper operation (published on Oct. 22, 1950): "The North Koreans at this small town were the most surprized Koreans seen yet. . . . As soon as the parachutes began to drop from the planes the farmers took off for their holes.

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Civilian casualties were heavy. In the burning town there was much mourning. All through the night shots were fired at confused wandering white-garbed farmers."

Or this (March 24, 1951): "Earlier, fighters had blasted the thatch-roofed villages of the area, leaving little more than flames and slowly rising spirals of smoke to mark their locations."

Or this (Oct. 19, 1950): "The besieged capital of North Korea looks from the air like an empty citadel where death is king. It seems no longer to be a city at all. It is more like a blackened community of the dead, a charred ghost town from which all the living have fled before a sudden plague."

The terrible destruction in Korea is not, of course, wholly due to U. S. methods of waging war; the enemy also is, obviously, destructive. It is a fact, however, that, because of our terrible mechanized power, it is the U. S. which has been most responsible for the mass devastation. As a *Times* correspondent wrote on Feb. 21, 1951 "the Communists had left their homes and schools standing in retreat while UN troops, fighting with much more destructive tools, left only blackened spots, where towns once stood."

The question of why there has been so little popular opposition to this sort of warfare can be, at least partly, explained by the fact that most of us don't know anything about it. Although our correspondents faithfully report these consequences of our techniques of war-making these reports are buried, often under misleading headlines, while the atrocities of the enemy are thundered in provocative headlines, and blazing editorials and radio programs. It can be assumed that if Americans did realize what we have done in Korea the majority would condemn our war-making as an atrocity—not only against the Korean people—but against our own civilization, since it is obvious that we can not convince the Asian peoples that "our side" stands for humanistic principles by practising the exact reverse.

In view of the general and overwhelming misery and destruction in Korea, our official military charges directed against enemy atrocities are bound to seem directed toward strategic rather than humanitarian ends. Our individual private grief and shock for our individual tortured and dead is human and real. But our official denunciation of the enemy's sadism (along with our editorial blasts and provocative headlines) seem less an expression of genuine concern for tortured human beings and more the expression of a desire to whip up popular support for a policy of revenge—a policy, that is, which can only lead to more such inevitable atrocities.

Finally, it might be argued that while terrorism is, so to speak, a built-in part of totalitarian regimes, it is not organically related to the structure of American society. The point is, however, that the waging of total war decisively influences the social structure and moral make-up of the countries involved. Acceptance of brutality as a necessary device to insure victory leads precisely to that moral callousness which is one of the distinguishing features of the totalitarian mind.

Public Pornography

THE POSTWAR FLOOD of pornography shows no sign of abating and, for once, it seems, the dim congressmen, stern churchmen, and stiff-laced ladies are complaining about something real and reckonable.

It is not my intent to oppose Vice, from which I derive as much pleasure as most people, but to point out that it is not Virtue; and that, while it doubtless has an ineradicable place in the scheme of things entire, that place tends, in polite society, to be private.

Its recent invasion of the public domain is unmistakable. The most obvious sign is that the two-bit monthlies "glorifying the American girl" which used to be confined to the newsstands around the tracks now overflow the back shelves of the racks in neighborhood drug and candy stores. Six years ago they could not be bought in a dry southern village, although they were imported from the nearby city to the barber shop, poolroom, and bar. Today they will be found on

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all the newsstands in a quiet Quaker town—or they were there until a mother, the local editor, and several ministers pounced upon the hapless police chief. They will be back again the day after tomorrow. The magazines are all the same: bosoms and butts, high heels, opera hose, leopard skins, manacles, whips and wrestling ladies. In the back pages, ads for "art photos" sent in plain envelopes via railway express. Was it for this that Peter Zenger stood trial?

Then, of course, there are the pulp books. Did the Gallup poll find $x\%$ of Americans, as against $x+y\%$ of the English, reading books? That was before the days of M. Spillane. Mr. Spillane is highbrow compared to some of his competitors in the new market of culture. The covers are worse than the innards? If only this were always true. Certainly there is Farrell, Faulkner, Moravia—even Cain. But there is also smut beside which the *Tropics* are prim and their author a little girl in a starched white petticoat. The subject matter is not clinching—lesbianism, prostitution, abortion, adultery have been themes of great literature—but the treatment is. It is not faintly Nice or Latin. Don't take my word; borrow a copy from your teenaged son and judge for yourself.

Finally, burlesque may be mentioned, an old institution that is flourishing again. The shows are packed—a second house has opened in Philadelphia—and, unless fading memories fail me, have hotted up in recent years (and American burlesque has always been dirtier than its English or French equivalent). But the most signficent change is the audience, formerly male, now often mixed—an observation the new Kinsey confirms: "A decade or two ago the burlesque audiences were almost exclusively male; today the audiences may include a more equal number of females. It is difficult . . . to explain this attendance by females in view of the fact that so few of them are aroused erotically by such shows. Apparently most females attend burlesque shows because they are social functions about which they are curious, and which they may share with their male companions." His explanation is not very explanatory. Curiosity has long characterized the female, but only since the war has it carried her this far.

How, then, is the spread of public pornography to be explained? In part, no doubt, as a continued liberalization of sexual standards that have been loosening since the Victorians tried to impound them. In part, as a consequence of the war, with its legion of sex-starved women at home and GIs abroad who took what they could get and wanted more of the same when they returned. And, finally, as a symptom of social malaise. Things are going too well. There is money around—but for how long? We're at peace—or are we? Eisenhower will look after things. Why doesn't Joe McCarthy relax with his wife? The Bomb is not getting smaller. We have bread. (When do our children die?) On with the circus!

HAROLD ORLANS

The Horror of Our Time

An appeal has recently been smuggled out of China, signed by five Chinese Trotskyists, asking the civilized world to protest against wholesale arrests of their comrades by the Mao government. The document offers details of midnight arrests, and adds that some people were rounded up by the government simply because they were "wives or brothers of Trotskyists."

Then comes the truly appalling section which makes clear that the appeal is being written by "official" Trotskyists who support the Mao regime. "We still stand firmly at our posts in the effort for national reconstruction." The victimized Trotskyists, say the authors, supported the Mao regime in the Korean war, "taking part in all sorts of 'Against American Aid to Korea' propaganda campaigns . . . they supported the government in purging the bourgeois corrosion of state properties. *Some even came out openly in favor of liquidating their own fathers.*" (Our emphasis.)

And there is the horror of our time—not merely that a false ideology can lead people to support the government that destroys them, but that any ideology, true or false, should seem to sanction the liquidation of one's own father.

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Young Man on the Make

RADICALS OF THE THIRTIES, Travers Clement has recently suggested, can be classified as repenters and dissenters. The former predominate.

Some magazines, such as *Commentary*, specialize in documents of repentance. The November 1953 issue carries an article by William Petersen called "Is America Still the Land of Opportunity?" He tries to show in ten pages that the opinion of most sociologists to the contrary notwithstanding, the America of a beautiful war economy is still a land of opportunity. Findings to the contrary are explained as distortions introduced by "scholarly myths," Marxism and "nostalgic Americanism." So far, the article is no different from scores of other exercises in repentance except for its especially shoddy logic.

But his conclusions are more interesting. He claims that "the United States . . . is becoming a socialist society" and that "the American economy is mixed but American culture is, in effect, socialist. It is based on the same essential factors — the enormous industrial production, the high and widely distributed income, the general distribution of equalitarian cultural values—that any socialist culture would rest on."

One might at first surmise that Mr. Petersen suffers from a semantic aphasia, a disturbance of the symbol sphere; but on second thought another idea occurred to me. Far from being insane, the man is a genius. And this is how I reasoned:

It is expected that the repenter will be particularly concerned with emphasizing his loyalty to new associates. He is likely to be more Catholic than the Pope, more loyal to the *status quo* than its habitual defenders. What is more, as Max Scheler has pointed out, he will engage in continuous acts of revenge upon his intellectual past. But from all this also comes a certain uneasiness and unrest, only partly veiled by the stridency of his attacks.

Now Mr. Petersen has hit upon a magic formula for the repenters. Others have laboriously persuaded themselves that capitalism is indeed preferable to "socialism-means-regimentation" but he argues that America *is* socialist and thus defense of the *status quo* becomes, by a marvellous transformation, a defense of one's earlier ideals. No more guilt, no more bouts with analysts, no more blushes upon meeting old friends. Capitalism *is* socialism, socialism *is* capitalism; you can prove both with quotations from Marx and Bukharin; and *Commentary*, of course, prints it. This is the first successful application in the United States of George Orwell's "Newspeak."

Watch that young man. He has a bright future.

L.C.

Books

AND MARX'S CARBUNCLES?

THORSTEIN VEBLEN. By David Riesman. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.

In this unsympathetic book Thorstein Veblen is not the subject, he is the victim. An uncomfortable figure to cozily-installed liberals, Veblen is psychoanalyzed away. "The violence," writes Riesman, "with which Thorstein Veblen in his declining years attacked all authorities would . . . seem, *inter alia*, to represent the return of the repressed hostility against his own domineering father." If Veblen's admiration goes to "masterless men," insubordinate Icelanders or rebellious Wobblies, doesn't that suggest a "quasi-homosexual concept of brotherly love?" "Like many great scholars and economists," continues Riesman, "who either did not marry or did not have children, Veblen appears never to have exorcised his own father," and so what can you expect but "anti-American feeling—with all hopes transferred to the Bolsheviks" from the "embittered Bolshevik who wrote *The Vested Interests* . ."? (Maybe he should have been investigated.)

Riesman's book is a prime exhibit of the current vogue for using pseudo-psychoanalytical terminology as a means of devaluating critics of the status quo; such analysis serves as a social defense mechanism. Masterless men can be made safe and innocuous if only they are re-

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duced to the dimensions of the middlebrow herd. And if their rebelliousness hasn't been analyzed away during their life-time, such neglect can be remedied posthumously (and thereby, with regard to Veblen, a good deal more safely). Strapping Veblen (or his corpse) to the couch, Riesman thinks he can counter the strength of Veblen's arguments by discovering private weaknesses.

After having stripped Veblen, the man, Riesman tries to drown Veblen's intellect in a syrup of cultivated prose. We are given not a systematic exposition of Veblen's ideas but formless and disconnected musings on a great many topics loosely related to the name "Veblen." Riesman demonstrates a trained incapacity for pursuing an idea for more than a paragraph. His remarks themselves are sometimes profound, more often simply clever and frequently irrelevant.

The book is further remarkable for its lack of serious attention to Veblen's economic theorizing, but in a way that is probably to the good. A writer who can declare that it was inconceivable to Marx "that business could actually make more profit by quantity production at low price than by restricted production at high price" and that Marx's theory of crisis assumed that crisis resulted from "the competition of firms within industry"—such a writer does wisely to avoid Veblen's economic theory.

Anyone who wants to gain insight into the dominant temper of American liberalism in a time of war economy, should read this book. For David Riesman possesses to an eminent degree what Lionel Trilling calls "the liberal imagination." L.C.

AUTOMATONS

A Critique of Cybernetics, by Hans Jonas. *Social Research, Summer* 1953, pp. 172-92.

A good critique of cybernetics is overdue. Six years now that unbaked idol has stood in the pantheon of social sciences, head packed with servo-mechanisms, computing equipment, feedback circuits, electronic information, and noise. This, we are told, is the image in which man is made.

Mr. Jonas does not think so. A philosopher, his argument is semantic and logical rather than empirical, and confined to the cybernetic concept of "purpose" or "teleology" mainly as used by Rosenblueth, Wiener, and Bigelow in a 1943 article in *Philosophy of Science*. Within these important limitations, his argument is sometimes excellent and nowhere less than sound; but it is less than just to associate Wiener, a modest and intelligent man, with many of his disciples' follies.

The three cyberneticians define purposeful behavior as that "directed to the attainment of a goal—i.e., to a final condition in which the behaving object reaches a definite correlation in time or in space with respect to another object or event." They cite the roulette wheel and the clock as orderly but "purposeless" mechanisms, because "there is no final condition toward which the movement . . . strives," whereas the target-seeking torpedo (alias "man") is "purposive" because it guides itself to its goal by reacting to signals received from the target. Jonas notes that the cyberneticians confuse serving a purpose (which both clock and torpedo do) with *having* a purpose (which neither does). Either the "purpose" of everything, animate and inanimate, is to reach a "final condition" of dissolution or rest in accordance with the law of entropy—in which case the word loses defining power; or "purpose" derives meaning from the goals —the needs, desires, and emotions—of living things alone.

"The cybernetical model reduces animal nature to the two terms of sentience and motility, while in fact it is constituted by the triad of perception, motility, and emotion. Emotion . . . is the animal translation of the fundamental drive which, even on the undifferentiated pre-animal level, operates in the ceaseless carrying on of the metabolism. A feedback mechanism may be going, or may be at rest: in either state the machine exists. The organism has to keep going, because to be going is its very existence —which is revocable. . . . There is no

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analogue in the machine to the instinct of self-preservation. . . ."

The cybernetician is in an inextricable dilemma. "He himself does not come under the terms of his own doctrine. He considers behavior, except his own; purposiveness, except his own; thinking, except his own. He views from without, withholding from his objects the privileges of his own reflective position. If asked why he embraces cybernetics, he would for once answer not in cybernetical terms of feedback, circular loops, and automatic control, but in terms like these: 'because I think it to be true . . .; or 'because it is the rising fashion. . . .'"

But if the cybernetician can set himself a goal and rationally pursue it, why not other men? If he is not an automaton, why are we?

HAROLD ORLANS

A BAKUNIN SAMPLER

THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF BAKUNIN: SCIENTIFIC ANARCHISM. Edited by G. P. Maximoff. The Free Press.

This book is a meticulous exposition of Bakunin's theoretical thought, taken mostly from the published books and articles, not from the incomparably greater mass of mss. which were assembled by Nettlau in his comprehensive *Life of Michael Bakunin,* itself still a handwritten manuscript copied out some fifty or a hundred times during 1896-1900 by the author. Yet it is no small thing that an important part of Bakunin's ideas are now presented for the first time in English. Unfortunately, they do not appear here in close connection with the historical conditions and concrete actions which entered into every theoretical concept of Bakunin. Without them, the living body of his "thought in action" is transformed into a purely ideological system—in this case, a system of four parts, 56 chapters and about 1,000 paragraphs. The same phrases, repeated with little variations, are connected only superficially through a merely verbal arrangement of titles and subtitles.

Nor is this fault fully repaired by the substantial additions made to the text by a Publisher's Preface and by an Introduction containing a survey of available editions of Bakunin's work, plus a short biography of Mr. Maximoff himself, written by the noted anarchist thinker, Rudolph Rocker. Even the inclusion of one of the short pamphlets on Bakunin's life which were published by Nettlau, the classic historian of anarchism, as a by-product perhaps or a respite from the incessant labors on his unfinished masterpiece, does not make up for the lack of historical and conceptual integration of the present book. It rather gives us a foretaste of the hidden treasures that are still contained in the unpublished parts of Nettlau's gigantic work on Bakunin.

There is only one example of the use of a substantial and coherent part of Bakunin's own argument for a summary of a whole part of the book as compiled and edited by Maximoff — the first twelve chapters of Part III being concluded by a long quotation from the "Program of the Alliance of International Revolution" of 1871. It is there, and there only, that the scattered elements of Maximoff's ideological exposition of Bakunin's thought are united by a summary that stems from Bakunin himself.

How much more useful would it have been if the great effort spent on this compilation of a few thousand isolated excerpts from a great mass of often quite heterogeneous books, pamphlets, letters and speeches had gone into an English edition of the complete text of even one of the major works of Bakunin. K.K.

BOOKS RECEIVED

IN THE TWILIGHT OF SOCIALISM, by Joseph Buttinger. Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., New York. 578 pages, $6.00.

This important study and history of the revolutionary socialists of Austria and the Social Democratic movement will be reviewed in detail in the next issue of DISSENT

THE THEORY OF THE LEISURE CLASS, by Thorstein Veblen. A mentor Pocket Book published by the New American Library; 35 c.

A reissue of the famous classic, with a provocative introduction by C. Wright Mills.

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Among Ourselves

This first issue of DISSENT contains 112 pages. We hope to stabilize the magazine at 96 pages each issue. To a large extent, the size will depend on the response we get from our readers. Though our life is now assured for at least a year, we are beginning with an extremely modest budget. And if we receive as many subscriptions as we hope to, we will be able to promote the magazine more widely and efficiently, thus gaining more readers.

•

We want to place DISSENT in as many libraries, both town and college, as we can. It would help if you would ask for it at your local library. It would also help if you sent us the name and address of the library. A sample mailing of the first issue has gone out to several hundred college libraries, but we may have missed yours.

For that matter, we'd appreciate having lists of potential subscribers to whom to send sample copies.

•

DISSENT badly needs clerical help. If you live in New York City and can donate an afternoon or an evening regularly, drop us a card.

•

What do you think of this first issue? Would you like to see the emphasis of the magazine shifted in one or another direction? We are very eager to receive comments from readers, and we hope to print some in the next issue. Criticisms, too.

•

Since all the work on DISSENT is being done on a volunteer basis, we are not too well equipped to take care of bundle orders. But we are prepared to send bundles to reliable agents in colleges, cities, etc. If there is a bookstore in your city that should receive DISSENT, why not talk to its owner, and send us his name and address? Subscriptions remain, however, our main goal. We offer DISSENT to dealers and agents at 40c per copy; returns permitted.

We have received a communication from Peacemakers, 2006 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa., enclosing a statement adopted at a conference in Chicago, held in October 1953. This statement in behalf of a "nonviolent revolutionary movement" to promote a "third Camp" position on the war question is too long to print here; but in a symposium on the war question that we hope to hold in later issues, a representative of this point of view will be invited to participate.

•

To Contributors: It would expedite the handling of your articles if you could send one or more carbons. The editors of DISSENT are widely scattered, and reading of manuscripts could be hastened by having several copies.

•

In Future Issues: NORMAN MAILER has promised an article for the second issue. The sociologist MELVIN TUMIN is working on a study of class relations in the U. S., which may be ready for the second issue. LEWIS COSER and IRVING HOWE are collaborating on a

(*Continued on next page*)

The Academic Mind

The opening of the lead article in *American Sociological Review*, October, 1953: "It is the main thesis of this paper that the industrialization of non-machine societies will eventually lead to the development of new societal patterns."

The conclusion of same article: "While this paper has discussed some of the long-run consequences of industrialization for underdeveloped areas, it does not imply that there cannot be any cultural continuity. . . . There is no evidence, for example, that any of the following have changed: music, art, religion, beliefs about the non-empirical world, and many folkways."

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Among Ourselves (Continued)

study called "The Image of Socialism" —what vision of the future various socialist tendencies have had. HAROLD ORLANS is to do a piece on Democracy and Social Planning. SIDNEY LENS, back from a long tour of Europe, has promised a report on European Socialism. There will be a special section called "Europe and America," containing a discussion of "neutralism," a report on the conference of the Committee for Cultural Freedom held on this subject, and a letter from a French socialist. We have received the translation of a fascinating essay by the famous French historian, ALBERT MATTHIEZ, called "Jacobinism and Bolshevism"; it will probably run together with fresh discussions of the same subject. And we are planning to translate from the German sociologist MAX SCHELER a study of the renegade as a social type.

Our Contributors: IRVING HOWE, author of several literary and political books, presently at work on a history of the U. S. Communist Party. C. WRIGHT MILLS, well-known sociologist whose most recent book was *White Collar*. H. BRAND, student of German affairs. GEORGE WOODCOCK, an English libertarian whose many books have dealt with literary and political subjects. LEWIS COSER, former editor of *The Modern Review*, a veteran socialist writer whose articles in *Politics* appeared under the pen-name of Lewis Clair. BERNARD ROSENBERG, a sociologist whose most recent article appeared in *The American Scholar*. STANLEY PLASTRIK'S article on England is taken from a full-length study he has written on that subject. HELEN MEARS, author of several books on the Far East. HAROLD ORLANS recently published a book analyzing the town planning program of Labor England.

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DISSENT

I. To disagree; without assent—

II. The act or state of dissenting; disagreement; refusal to conform—

III (Latin *dis-*, apart, — *sentio,* feel)

—Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary

What does DISSENT plan to do?

- provide fresh and lively critical opinion on the issues of the day.
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